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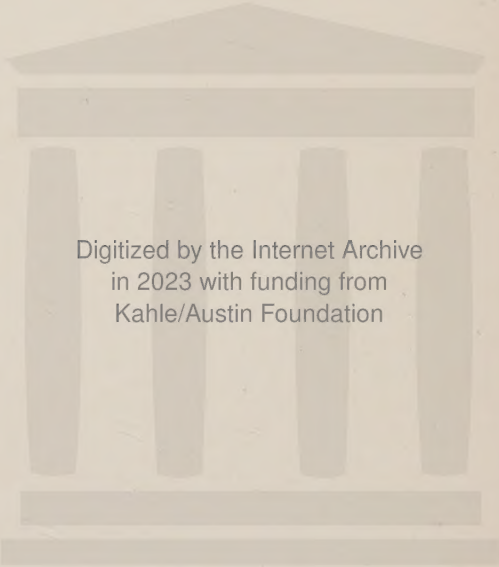
**PRIZE WINNING
CLASSIC**

A full-page illustration of a man, Jean Christophe, with light brown hair, wearing a dark coat over a pink shirt and a dark cravat. He is holding a rolled-up document in his right hand and resting his left hand on a dark surface. The background is a solid red color.

Jean Christophe

A Romantic Novel by ROMAIN ROLLAND

The authoritative modern abridgment by EDMUND FULLER



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Romain Rolland was awarded
The Nobel Prize in Literature
for his great romantic novel,
JEAN-CHRISTOPHE.

A screen adaptation of this
literary masterpiece is now
being prepared by 20th Century Fox.

ROMAIN ROLLAND

Jean- Christophe

Translated from the French by Gilbert Cannan

*The authoritative modern abridgment
by Edmund Fuller*



Published by
DELL PUBLISHING CO., INC.
750 Third Avenue
New York 17, N. Y.

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Henry Holt and Company, Inc.

Abridged by arrangement with
Henry Holt and Company, Inc.

Designed and produced by
Western Printing & Lithographing Company

First Dell printing—April, 1958

Printed in U.S.A.

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EDITOR'S NOTE

Jean-Christophe was one of the first great works of fiction of this century. It is on a Tolstoyan scale, and is conceived and written in Tolstoyan spirit, though we must be frank enough to concede that Romain Rolland had less than the genius of Tolstoy. The novel appeared in France in a succession of ten volumes over the years 1904 to 1912. Beyond a doubt it was a major factor in winning for Rolland the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1915.

The 1,577 pages of this epic novel simply could not be produced in a low-cost, mass-market, paperback edition without abridgment. Yet such an edition is needed and has a genuine contribution to make toward widening the acquaintance of modern readers with this classic of French literature of their own century.

The text of the Gilbert Cannan translation has been tampered with in no way except for the inescapable cutting. As one who has loved *Jean-Christophe* for many years before being confronted with the task of preparing an abridgment of it, I would like to say something about the principle that has guided the process.

Rolland, like his master, Tolstoy, chose to use the medium of the novel as a vehicle for philosophical treatises as well as for a story. A great proportion of the complete book's bulk consists of didactic or polemic discussions of late 19th-century European art, morals, philosophy, and politics. Analyses of the French character as compared to the German character in these realms occupy much space. For the dedicated reader this material has not wholly lost its value. But since Rolland stretched the liberties of the novelist to the limit in such digressions, and since time has robbed this material of much of its topical or immediate relevance, I sincerely believe that the cutting of a great deal of it,

which accounts for the largest units of deletion, is a service to the general reader.

In spite of abridgment, the central focus of the book remains unimpaired in the qualities which have earned the novel its fame. Its core is the uniquely studied, cradle-to-grave life of the composer, Jean-Christophe Krafft. He is a tempestuous, frankly Beethovenesque figure, filled with creative frenzy, intemperate and often intolerant, burning in a strange blend of puritanical integrity with sensuous creativity. Christophe is presented to us as a character study of epic scale. Rolland has gone perhaps as far as a writer can go in interpreting for us the mysteries of genius and the creative process.

Rolland says, "All greatness is good. . . . What casts down and overwhelms and blasts the soul beyond all hope is mediocrity in sorrow and joy. . . ." This book offers a contrast to such mediocrity in much current fiction. Here is a ringing affirmation of the dignity and creativity of Man. In an age when many novelists assert the triumph of Nothingness, the inward voice that speaks to Christophe in time of crisis speaks also to us: "I am Life fighting Nothingness." *Jean-Christophe* is an adventure in art, in body, and in soul.

EDMUND FULLER

BOOK ONE

Jean-Christophe

THE DAWN

I

From behind the house rises the murmuring of the river. All day long the rain has been beating against the windowpanes; a stream of water trickles down the window at the corner where it is broken. The yellowish light of the day dies down. The room is dim and dull.

The new-born child stirs in his cradle. Although the old man left his sabots at the door when he entered, his footsteps make the floor creak. The child begins to whine. The mother leans out of her bed to comfort it; and the grandfather gropes to light the lamp, so that the child shall not be frightened by the night when he awakes. The flame of the lamp lights up old Jean Michel's red face, with its rough white beard and morose expression and quick eyes. He goes near the cradle. His cloak smells wet, and as he walks he drags his large blue list slippers. Louisa signs to him not to go too near. She is fair, almost white: her features are drawn; her gentle, stupid face is marked with red in patches; her lips are pale and swollen, and they are parted in a timid smile; her eyes devour the child—and her eyes are blue and vague; the pupils are small, but there is an infinite tenderness in them.

The child wakes and cries, and his eyes are troubled. Oh! how terrible! The darkness, the sudden flash of the lamp, the hallucinations of a mind as yet hardly detached from chaos, the stifling, roaring night in which it is enveloped, the illimitable gloom from which, like blinding shafts of light, there emerge acute sensations, sorrows, phantoms—those enormous faces leaning over him, those eyes that pierce through him, penetrating, are beyond his comprehension!

... He has not the strength to cry out; terror holds him motionless, with eyes and mouth wide open and he rattles in his throat. His large head, that seems to have swollen up, is wrinkled with the grotesque and lamentable grimaces that he makes; the skin of his face and hands is brown and purple, and spotted with yellow. . . .

"Dear God!" said the old man with conviction: "How ugly he is!"

He put the lamp down on the table.

Louisa pouted like a scolded child. Jean Michel looked at her out of the corner of his eye and laughed.

"You don't want me to say that he is beautiful? You would not believe it. Come, it is not your fault. They are all like that."

The child came out of the stupor and immobility into which he had been thrown by the light of the lamp and the eyes of the old man. He began to cry. Perhaps he instinctively felt in his mother's eyes a caress which made it possible for him to complain. She held out her arms for him and said:

"Give him to me."

The old man began, as usual, to air his theories:

"You ought not to give way to children when they cry. You must just let them cry."

But he came and took the child and grumbled:

"I never saw one quite so ugly."

Louisa took the child feverishly and pressed it to her bosom. She looked at it with a bashful and delighted smile.

"Oh, my poor child!" she said shamefacedly. "How ugly you are—how ugly! and how I love you!"

Both Jean Michel, sitting by the fireside, and Louisa, dreamed sadly. The old man had bitter thoughts about his son's marriage, and Louisa was thinking of it also, and blaming herself, although she had nothing wherewith to reproach herself.

She had been a servant when, to everybody's surprise, and her own especially, she married Melchior Krafft, Jean Michel's son. The Kraffts were without fortune, but were considerable people in the little Rhine town in which the old

man had settled down more than fifty years before. Both father and son were musicians, and known to all the musicians of the country from Cologne to Mannheim. Melchior played the violin at the Hof-Theater, and Jean Michel had formerly been director of the grand-ducal concerts. The old man had been profoundly humiliated by his son's marriage, for he had built great hopes upon Melchior; he had wished to make him the distinguished man which he had failed to become himself. This mad freak destroyed all his ambitions. He had stormed at first, and showered curses upon Melchior and Louisa. But, being a good-hearted creature, he forgave his daughter-in-law when he learned to know her better; and he even came by a paternal affection for her, which showed itself for the most part in snubs.

No one ever understood what it was that drove Melchior to such a marriage—least of all Melchior. It was certainly not Louisa's beauty. She had no seductive quality: she was small, rather pale, and delicate, and she was a striking contrast to Melchior and Jean Michel, who were both big and broad, red-faced giants, heavy-handed, hearty eaters and drinkers, laughter-loving and noisy. She seemed to be crushed by them; no one noticed her, and she seemed to wish to escape even what little notice she attracted. If Melchior had been a kind-hearted man, it would have been credible that he should prefer Louisa's simple goodness to every other advantage; but a vainer man never was. It seemed incredible that a young man of his kidney, fairly good-looking, and quite conscious of it, very foolish, but not without talent, and in a position to look for some well-dowered match, and capable even—who knows?—of turning the head of one of his pupils among the people of the town, should suddenly have chosen a girl of the people—poor, uneducated, without beauty, a girl who could in no way advance his career.

But Melchior was one of those men who always do the opposite of what is expected of them and of what they expect of themselves. Hardly was he married than he was appalled by what he had done, and he did not hide what he felt from poor Louisa, who humbly asked his pardon. He

was not a bad fellow, and he willingly granted her that; but immediately remorse would seize him again when he was with his friends or in the houses of his rich pupils, who were disdainful in their treatment of him, and no longer trembled at the touch of his hand when he corrected the position of their fingers on the keyboard. Then he would return gloomy of countenance, and Louisa, with a catch at her heart, would read in it with the first glance the customary reproach; or he would stay out late at one inn or another, there to seek self-respect or kindness from others. On such evenings he would return shouting with laughter, and this was more doleful for Louisa than the hidden reproach and gloomy rancor that prevailed on other days. She felt that she was to a certain extent responsible for the fits of madness in which the small remnant of her husband's sense would disappear, together with the household money. Melchior sank lower and lower. At an age when he should have been engaged in unceasing toil to develop his mediocre talent, he just let things slide, and others took his place.

But what did that matter to the unknown force which had thrown him in with the little flaxen-haired servant? He had played his part, and little Jean-Christophe had just set foot on this earth whither his destiny had thrust him.

Night was fully come. Louisa's voice roused old Jean Michel from the torpor into which he had sunk by the fireside as he thought of the sorrows of the past and present.

"It must be late, father," said the young woman affectionately. "You ought to go home; you have far to go."

"I am waiting for Melchior," replied the old man.

"Please, no. I would rather you did not stay."

"Why?"

The old man raised his head and looked fiercely at her. She did not reply.

He resumed.

"You are afraid. You do not want me to meet him?"

"Yes, yes; it would only make things worse. You would make each other angry, and I don't want that. Please, please go!"

The old man sighed, rose, and said:

"Well . . . I'll go."

He went to her and brushed her forehead with his stiff beard. He asked if she wanted anything, put out the lamp, and went stumbling against the chairs in the darkness of the room. But he had no sooner reached the staircase than he thought of his son returning drunk, and he stopped at each step, imagining a thousand dangers that might arise if Melchior were allowed to return alone. . . .

In the bed by his mother's side the child was stirring again. An unknown sorrow had arisen from the depths of his being. He stiffened himself against her. He twisted his body, clenched his fists, and knitted his brows. His suffering increased steadily, quietly, certain of its strength. He knew not what it was, nor whence it came. It appeared immense, —infinite, and he began to cry lamentably. His mother caressed him with her gentle hands. Already his suffering was less acute. But he went on weeping, for he felt it still near, still inside himself. A man who suffers can lessen his anguish by knowing whence it comes. By thought he can locate it in a certain portion of his body which can be cured, or, if necessary, torn away. He fixes the bounds of it, and separates it from himself. A child has no such illusive resource. His first encounter with suffering is more tragic and more true. Like his own being, it seems infinite. He feels that it is seated in his bosom, housed in his heart, and is mistress of his flesh. And it is so. It will not leave his body until it has eaten it away.

His mother hugs him to her, murmuring: "It is done—it is done! Don't cry, my little Jesus, my little goldfish. . . ." But his intermittent outcry continues. It is as though this wretched, unformed, and unconscious mass had a presentiment of a whole life of sorrow awaiting him, and nothing can appease him. . . .

The shadows pass; the sun penetrates the forest. Jean-Christophe begins to find his way through the labyrinth of the day.

It is morning. His parents are asleep. He is in his little

bed, lying on his back. He looks at the rays of light dancing on the ceiling. There is infinite amusement in it. Now he laughs out loud with one of those jolly children's laughs which stir the hearts of those that hear them. His mother leans out of her bed towards him, and says: "What is it, then, little mad thing?" Then he laughs again, and perhaps he makes an effort to laugh because he has an audience. His mamma looks severe, and lays a finger on her lips to warn him lest he should wake his father: but her weary eyes smile in spite of herself. They whisper together. Then there is a furious growl from his father. Both tremble. His mother hastily turns her back on him, like a naughty little girl: she pretends to be asleep. Jean-Christophe buries himself in his bed, and holds his breath. . . . Dead silence.

He is in church with his grandfather. He is bored. He is not very comfortable. He is forbidden to stir, and all the people are saying all together words that he does not understand. They all look solemn and gloomy. It is not their usual way of looking. He looks at them, half frightened. Old Lena, their neighbor, who is sitting next to him, looks very cross; there are moments when he does not recognize even his grandfather. He is afraid a little. Then he grows used to it, and tries to find relief from boredom by every means at his disposal. He balances on one leg, twists his neck to look at the ceiling, makes faces, pulls his grandfather's coat, investigates the straws in his chair, tries to make a hole in them with his finger, listens to the singing of birds, and yawns so that he is like to dislocate his jaw.

Suddenly there is a deluge of sound: the organ is played. A thrill goes down his spine. He turns and stands with his chin resting on the back of his chair, and he looks very wise. He does not understand this noise; he does not know the meaning of it; it is dazzling, bewildering, and he can hear nothing clearly. But it is good. It is as though he were no longer sitting there on an uncomfortable chair in a tiresome old house. He is suspended in mid-air, like a bird; and when the flood of sound rushes from one end of the church to the other, filling the arches, reverberating from wall to wall, he

is carried with it, flying and skimming hither and thither, with nothing to do but to abandon himself to it. He is free; he is happy. The sun shines. . . . He falls asleep.

His grandfather is displeased with him. He behaves ill at Mass.

Sometimes he takes advantage of his mother's back being turned, to escape from the house. At first they used to run after him and bring him back. Then they got used to letting him go alone, only so he did not go too far away. The house is at the end of the town; the country begins almost at once. As long as he is within sight of the windows he goes without stopping, very deliberately, and now and then hopping on one foot. But as soon as he has passed the corner of the road, and the brushwood hides him from view, he changes abruptly. He stops there, with his finger in his mouth, to find out what story he shall tell himself that day; for he is full of stories. True, they are all very much like each other, and every one of them could be told in a few lines. He chooses. Generally he takes up the same story, sometimes from the point where it left off, sometimes from the beginning, with variations. But any trifle—a word heard by chance—is enough to set his mind off on another direction.

Chance was fruitful of resources. It is impossible to imagine what can be made of a simple piece of wood, a broken bough found alongside a hedge. (You break them off when you do not find them.) It was a magic wand. If it were long and thin, it became a lance, or perhaps a sword; to brandish it aloft was enough to cause armies to spring from the earth. Jean-Christophe was their general, marching in front of them, setting them an example, and leading them to the assault of a hillock. If the branch were flexible, it changed into a whip. Jean-Christophe mounted on horseback and leaped precipices. Sometimes his mount would slip, and the horseman would find himself at the bottom of the ditch, sorrily looking at his dirty hands and barked knees. If the wand were lithe, then Jean-Christophe would make himself the conductor of an orchestra: he would be both conductor and orchestra; he conducted and he sang;

and then he would salute the bushes, with their little green heads stirring in the wind.

And always in the middle of all these games there used to occur to him moments of strange dreaming and complete forgetfulness. Everything about him would then be blotted out; he would not know what he was doing, and was not even conscious of himself. These attacks would take him unawares. Sometimes as he walked or went upstairs a void would suddenly open before him. He would seem then to have lost all thought. But when he came back to himself, he was shocked and bewildered to find himself in the same place on the dark staircase. It was as though he had lived through a whole lifetime—in the space of a few steps.

His grandfather used often to take him with him on his evening walk. The little boy used to trot by his side and give him his hand. They used to go by the roads, across plowed fields, which smelled strong and good. The grasshoppers chirped. Enormous crows poised along the road used to watch them approach from afar, and then fly away heavily as they came up with them.

His grandfather would cough. Jean-Christophe knew quite well what that meant. The old man was burning with the desire to tell a story; but he wanted it to appear that the child had asked him for one. Jean-Christophe did not fail him; they understood each other. The old man had a tremendous affection for his grandson, and it was a great joy to find in him a willing audience. He loved to tell of episodes in his own life, or stories of great men, ancient and modern. His voice would then become emphatic and filled with emotion, and would tremble with a childish joy, which he used to try to stifle. He seemed delighted to hear his own voice. Unhappily, words used to fail him when he opened his mouth to speak. He was used to such disappointment, for it always came upon him with his outbursts of eloquence. And as he used to forget it with each new attempt, he never succeeded in resigning himself to it.

He used to talk of Regulus, and Arminius, of the soldiers of Lützow, of Kørner, and of Frédéric Stabs, who tried to kill the Emperor Napoleon. His face would glow as he told

of incredible deeds of heroism. He used to pronounce historic words in such a solemn voice that it was impossible to hear them, and he used to try artfully to keep his hearer on tenterhooks at the thrilling moments. He would stop, pretend to choke, and noisily blow his nose; and his heart would leap when the child asked, in a voice choking with impatience: "And then, grandfather?"

There came a day, when Jean-Christophe was a little older, when he perceived his grandfather's method; and then he wickedly set himself to assume an air of indifference to the rest of the story, and that hurt the poor old man. But for the moment Jean-Christophe is altogether held by the power of the story-teller. His blood leaped at the dramatic passages. He did not know what it was all about, neither where nor when these deeds were done, or whether his grandfather knew Arminius, or whether Regulus were not—God knows why!—some one whom he had seen at church last Sunday. But his heart and the old man's heart swelled with joy and pride in the tale of heroic deeds, as though they themselves had done them; for the old man and the child were both children.

Evening now, and the house is shut up. Home . . . the refuge from all terrifying things—darkness, night, fear, things unknown. No enemy can pass the threshold. . . . The fire flares. A golden duck turns slowly on the spit; a delicious smell of fat and of crisping flesh scents the room. The joy of eating, incomparable delight, a religious enthusiasm, thrills of joy! The body is too languid with the soft warmth, and the fatigues of the day, and the familiar voices. The act of digestion plunges it in ecstasy, and faces, shadows, the lampshade, the tongues of flame dancing with a shower of stars in the fireplace—all take on a magical appearance of delight. Jean-Christophe lays his cheek on his plate, the better to enjoy all this happiness. . . .

He is in his soft bed. How did he come there? He is overcome with weariness. The buzzing of the voices in the room and the visions of the day are intermingled in his mind. His father takes his violin; the shrill sweet sounds cry out complaining in the night. But the crowning joy is when

his mother comes and takes Jean-Christophe's hands. He is drowsy, and, leaning over him, in a low voice she sings, as he asks, an old song with words that have no meaning. His father thinks such music stupid, but Jean-Christophe never wearies of it. He holds his breath, and is between laughing and crying. His heart is intoxicated. He does not know where he is, and he is overflowing with tenderness. He throws his little arms round his mother's neck, and hugs her with all his strength. She says, laughing:

"You want to strangle me?"

He hugs her close. How he loves her! How he loves everything! Everything, everything! All is good, all is beautiful. . . . He sleeps. The cricket on the hearth cheeps. His grandfather's tales, the great heroes, float by in the happy night. . . . To be a hero like them! . . . Yes, he will be that . . . he is that. . . . Ah, how good it is to live!

What an abundance of strength, joy, pride, is in that little creature! What superfluous energy! His body and mind never cease to move; they are carried round and round breathlessly. Like a little salamander, he dances day and night in the flames. He is an unwearying enthusiasm finding its food in all things. A delicious dream, a bubbling well, a treasure of inexhaustible hope, a laugh, a song, unending drunkenness. Life does not hold him yet; always he escapes it. He swims in the infinite. How happy he is! He is made to be happy! There is nothing in him that does not believe in happiness, and does not cling to it with all his little strength and passion! . . .

Life will soon see to it that he is brought to reason.

II

The Kraffts came originally from Antwerp. Old Jean Michel had left the country as a result of a boyish freak, a violent quarrel, such as he had often had, for he was devilish pugnacious, and it had had an unfortunate ending. He settled down, almost fifty years ago, in the little town of the

principality, with its red-pointed roofs and shady gardens, lying on the slope of a gentle hill, mirrored in the pale green eyes of *Vater Rhein*. An excellent musician, he had readily gained appreciation in a country of musicians. He had taken root there by marrying, forty years ago, Clara Sartorius, daughter of the Prince's *Kapellmeister*, whose duties he took over.

Jean Michel had transferred all his ambitions to his son, and at first Melchoir had promised to realize them. From childhood he had shown great musical gifts. He learned with extraordinary facility, and quickly acquired as a violinist a virtuosity which for a long time made him the favorite, almost the idol, of the Court concerts. He played the piano and other instruments pleasantly. He was a fine talker, well, though a little heavily, built, and was of the type which passes in Germany for classic beauty; he had a large brow that expressed nothing, large regular features, and a curled beard—a Jupiter of the banks of the Rhine. Old Jean Michel enjoyed his son's success; he was ecstatic over the virtuoso's *tours de force*, he who had never been able properly to play any instrument. In truth, Melchoir would have had no difficulty in expressing what he thought. The trouble was that he did not think; and he did not even bother about it. He had the soul of a mediocre comedian who takes pains with the inflexions of his voice without caring about what they express, and, with anxious vanity, watches their effect on his audience.

The odd thing was that, in spite of his constant anxiety about his stage pose, there was in him, as in Jean Michel, in spite of his timid respect for social conventions, a curious, irregular, unexpected and chaotic quality, which made people say that the Kraffts were a bit crazy. It did not harm him at first; it seemed as though these very eccentricities were the proof of the genius attributed to him; for it is understood among people of common sense that an artist has none. But it was not long before his extravagances were traced to their source—usually the bottle. Nietzsche says that Bacchus is the God of Music, and Melchior's instinct was of the same opinion; but in his case his god was very un-

grateful to him; far from giving him the ideas he lacked, he took away from him the few that he had. After his absurd marriage—absurd in the eyes of the world, and therefore also in his own—he gave himself up to it more and more. He neglected his playing—so secure in his own superiority that very soon he lost it. Other *virtuosi* came to succeed him in public favor. That was bitter to him, but instead of rousing his energy, these rebuffs only discouraged him. He avenged himself by crying down his rivals with his pot-fellows. In his absurd conceit he counted on succeeding his father as musical director: another man was appointed. He thought himself persecuted, and took on the airs of a misunderstood genius. Thanks to the esteem in which old Krafft was held, he kept his place as a violin in the orchestra, but gradually he lost all his lessons in the town. And if this blow struck most at his vanity, it touched his purse even more. For several years the resources of his household had grown less and less, following on various reverses of fortune. After having known plenty, want came, and every day increased. Melchior refused to take notice of it; he did not spend one penny the less on his toilet or his pleasures.

It was when the situation of his family had reached its most difficult point, that little Jean-Christophe began to understand what was going on about him.

He was no longer the only child. Melchior gave his wife a child every year, without troubling to think what was to become of it later. Two had died young; two others were three and four years old. Melchior never bothered about them. Louisa, when she had to go out, left them with Jean-Christophe, now six years old.

There were now times of extremely straitened circumstances at home. They became more and more frequent. They lived meagerly then. No one was more sensible of it than Jean-Christophe. His father saw nothing. He was served first, and there was always enough for him. He talked noisily, and roared with laughter at his own jokes, and he never noticed his wife's glances as she gave a forced laugh, while she watched him helping himself. When he passed the dish it was more than half empty. Louisa helped the children

—two potatoes each. When it came to Jean-Christophe's turn there were sometimes only three left, and his mother was not helped. He knew that beforehand; he had counted them before they came to him. Then he summoned up courage, and said carelessly:

"Only one, mother."

She was a little put out.

"Two, like the others."

"No, please; only one."

"Aren't you hungry?"

"No, I'm not very hungry."

But she, too, only took one, and they peeled them carefully, cut them up in little pieces, and tried to eat them as slowly as possible. His mother watched him. When he had finished:

"Come, take it!"

"No, mother."

"But you are ill?"

"I am not ill, but I have eaten enough."

Then his father would reproach him with being obstinate, and take the last potato for himself. But Jean-Christophe learned that trick, and he used to keep it on his plate for Ernest, his little brother, who was always hungry, and watched him out of the corner of his eyes from the beginning of dinner, and ended by asking:

"Aren't you going to eat it? Give it me, then, Jean-Christophe."

Oh, how Jean-Christophe detested his father, how he hated him for not thinking of them, or for not even dreaming that he was eating their share! He was so hungry that he hated him, and would gladly have told him so; but he thought in his pride that he had no right, since he could not earn his own living. His father had earned the bread that he took. He himself was good for nothing; he was a burden on everybody; he had no right to talk. Later on he would talk—if there were any later on. Oh, he would die of hunger first! . . .

He suffered more than another child would have done from these cruel fasts. His robust stomach was in agony.

Sometimes he trembled because of it; his head ached. There was a hole in his chest—a hole which turned and widened, as if a gimlet were being twisted in it. But he did not complain. He felt his mother's eyes upon him, and assumed an expression of indifference. Louisa, with a clutching at her heart, understood vaguely that her little boy was denying himself so that the others might have more. She rejected the idea, but always returned to it. She dared not investigate it or ask Jean-Christophe if it were true, for, if it were true, what could she do? She had been used to privation since her childhood. What is the use of complaining when there is nothing to be done? She never suspected, indeed—she, with her frail health and small needs—that the boy might suffer more than herself. She did not say anything, but once or twice, when the others were gone, the children to the street, Melchior about his business, she asked her eldest son to stay to do her some small service. Jean-Christophe would hold her skein while she unwound it. Suddenly she would throw everything away, and draw him passionately to her. She would take him on her knees, although he was quite heavy, and would hug and hug him. He would fling his arms round her neck, and the two of them would weep desperately, embracing each other.

“My poor little boy! . . .”

“Mother, mother! . . .”

They said no more, but they understood each other.

It was some time before Jean-Christophe realized that his father drank. One evening about seven o'clock he was alone in the house. His little brothers had gone out with Jean Michel. Louisa was washing the linen in the river. The door opened, and Melchior plunged in. He was hatless and disheveled. He cut a sort of caper to cross the threshold, and then plumped down in a chair by the table. Jean-Christophe began to laugh, thinking it was a part of one of the usual buffooneries, and he approached him. But as soon as he looked more closely at him the desire to laugh left him. Melchior sat there with his arms hanging, and looking straight in front of him, seeing nothing, with his eyes blink-

ing. His face was crimson, his mouth was open, and from it there gurgled every now and then a silly laugh. Jean-Christophe stood stock-still. He thought at first that his father was joking, but when he saw that he did not budge he was panic-stricken.

"Papa, papa!" he cried.

Melchoir went on gobbling like a fowl. Jean-Christophe took him by the arm in despair, and shook him with all his strength.

"Papa, dear papa, answer me, please, please!"

Melchior's body shook like a boneless thing, and all but fell. His head flopped towards Jean-Christophe; he looked at him and babbled incoherently and irritably. When Jean-Christophe's eyes met those clouded eyes he was seized with panic terror. He ran away to the other end of the room, and threw himself on his knees by the bed, and buried his face in the clothes. He remained so for some time. Melchior swung heavily on the chair, sniggering. Jean-Christophe stopped his ears, so as not to hear him, and trembled. What was happening within him was inexpressible. It was a terrible upheaval—terror, sorrow, as though for some one dead, some one dear and honored.

No one came; they were left alone. Night fell, and Jean-Christophe's fear grew as the minutes passed. He could not help listening, and his blood froze as he heard the voice that he did not recognize. The silence made it all the more terrifying; the limping clock beat time for the senseless babbling. He could bear it no longer; he wished to fly. But he had to pass his father to get out, and Jean-Christophe shuddered at the idea of seeing those eyes again; it seemed to him that he must die if he did. He tried to creep on hands and knees to the door of the room. He could not breathe; he would not look; he stopped at the least movement from Melchior, whose feet he could see under the table. One of the drunken man's legs trembled. Jean-Christophe reached the door. With one trembling hand he pushed the handle, but in his terror he let go. It shut to again. Melchior turned to look. The chair on which he was balanced toppled over; he fell down with a crash. Jean-Christophe in his terror had no

strength left for flight. He remained glued to the wall, looking at his father stretched there at his feet, and he cried for help.

His fall sobered Melchior a little. He cursed and swore, and thumped on the chair that had played him such a trick. He tried vainly to get up, and then did manage to sit up with his back resting against the table, and he recognized his surroundings. He saw Jean-Christophe crying; he called him. Jean-Christophe wanted to run away; he could not stir. Melchior called him again, and as the child did not come, he swore angrily. Jean-Christophe went near him, trembling in every limb. Melchior drew the boy near him, and made him sit on his knees. He began by pulling his ears, and in a thick, stuttering voice delivered a homily on the respect due from a son to his father. Then he went off suddenly on a new train of thought, and made him jump in his arms while he rattled off silly jokes. He wriggled with laughter. From that he passed immediately to melancholy ideas. He commiserated the boy and himself; he hugged him so that he was like to choke, covered him with kisses and tears, and finally rocked him in his arms, intoning the *De Profundis*. Jean-Christophe made no effort to break loose; he was frozen with horror. Stifled against his father's bosom, feeling his breath hiccoughing and smelling of wine upon his face, wet with his kisses and repulsive tears, he was in an agony of fear and disgust. He would have screamed, but no sound would come from his lips. He remained in this horrible condition for an age, as it seemed to him, until the door opened, and Louisa came in with a basket of linen on her arm. She gave a cry, let the basket fall, rushed at Jean-Christophe, and with a violence which seemed incredible in her she wrenched Melchior's arm, crying:

"Drunken, drunken wretch!"

Her eyes flashed with anger.

Jean-Christophe thought his father was going to kill her. But Melchior was so startled by the threatening appearance of his wife that he made no reply, and began to weep. He rolled on the floor; he beat his head against the furniture, and said that she was right, that he was a drunkard, that he

brought misery upon his family, and was ruining his poor children, and wished he were dead. Louisa had contemptuously turned her back on him. She carried Jean-Christophe into the next room, and caressed him and tried to comfort him. The boy went on trembling, and did not answer his mother's questions; then he burst out sobbing. Louisa bathed his face with water. She kissed him, and used tender words, and wept with him. In the end they were both comforted. She knelt, and made him kneel by her side. They prayed to God to cure father of his disgusting habit, and make him the kind, good man that he used to be. Louisa put the child to bed. He wanted her to stay by his bedside and hold his hand. Louisa spent part of the night sitting on Jean-Christophe's bed. He was feverish. The drunken man snored on the floor.

The grandfather gave the children an old piano, which one of his clients, anxious to be rid of it, had asked him to take. His patient ingenuity had almost put it in order. The present had not been very well received. Louisa thought her room already too small, without filling it up any more; and Melchior said that Jean Michel had not ruined himself over it: just firewood. Only Jean-Christophe was glad of it without exactly knowing why. It seemed to him a magic box, full of marvelous stories, just like the ones in the fairy-book—a volume of the “Thousand and One Nights”—which his grandfather read to him sometimes to their mutual delight. He had heard his father try the piano on the day of its arrival, and draw from it a little rain of arpeggios like the drops that a puff of wind shakes from the wet branches of a tree after a shower. He clapped his hands, and cried “Encore!” but Melchior scornfully closed the piano, saying that it was worthless. Jean-Christophe did not insist, but after that he was always hovering about the instrument. As soon as no one was near he would raise the lid, and softly press down a key, just as if he were moving with his finger the living shell of some great insect; he wanted to push out the creature that was locked up in it. Sometimes in his haste he would strike too hard, and then his mother would cry

out, "Will you not be quiet? Don't go touching everything!" or else he would pinch himself cruelly in closing the piano, and make piteous faces as he sucked his bruised fingers. . . .

Now his greatest joy is when his mother is gone out for a day's service, or to pay some visit in the town. He listens as she goes down the stairs, and into the street, and away. He is alone. He opens the piano, and brings up a chair, and perches on it. His shoulders just about reach the keyboard; it is enough for what he wants. Why does he wait until he is alone? No one would prevent his playing so long as he did not make too much noise. But he is ashamed before the others, and dare not. And then they talk and move about: that spoils his pleasure. It is so much more beautiful when he is alone! Jean-Christophe holds his breath so that the silence may be even greater, and also because he is a little excited, as though he were going to let off a gun. His heart beats as he lays his finger on the key; sometimes he lifts his finger after he has the key half pressed down, and lays it on another. Does he know what will come out of it, more than what will come out of the other? Suddenly a sound issues from it; there are deep sounds and high sounds, some tinkling, some roaring. The child listens to them one by one as they die away and finally cease to be; they hover in the air like bells heard far off, coming near in the wind, and then going away again; then when you listen you hear in the distance other voices, different, joining in and droning like flying insects; they seem to call to you, to draw you away farther—farther and farther into the mysterious regions, where they dive down and are lost. . . . They are gone! . . . No; still they murmur. . . . A little beating of wings. . . . How strange it all is! They are like spirits. How is it that they are so obedient? how is it that they are held captive in this old box? But best of all is when you lay two fingers on two keys at once. Then you never know exactly what will happen. Sometimes the two spirits are hostile; they are angry with each other, and fight; and hate each other, and buzz testily. Then voices are raised; they cry out, angrily, now sorrowfully. Jean-Christophe adores that; it is as though there were monsters chained up, biting at their

fetters, beating against the bars of their prison; they are like to break them, and burst out like the monsters in the fairy-book—the genii imprisoned in the Arab bottles under the seal of Solomon. Others flatter you; they try to cajole you, but you feel that they only want to bite, that they are hot and fevered. Jean-Christophe does not know what they want, but they lure him and disturb him; they make him almost blush. And sometimes there are notes that love each other; sounds embrace, as people do with their arms when they kiss: they are gracious and sweet. These are the good spirits; their faces are smiling, and there are no lines in them; they love little Jean-Christophe, and little Jean-Christophe loves them. Tears come to his eyes as he hears them, and he is never weary of calling them up. They are his friends, his dear, tender friends. . . .

So the child journeys through the forest of sounds, and round him he is conscious of thousands of forces lying in wait for him, and calling to him to caress or devour him. . . .

One day Melchior came upon him thus. He made him jump with fear at the sound of his great voice. Jean-Christophe, thinking he was doing wrong, quickly put his hands up to his ears to ward off the blows he feared. But Melchior did not scold him, strange to say; he was in a good temper, and laughed.

“You like that, boy?” he asked, patting his head kindly. “Would you like me to teach you to play it?”

Would he like! . . . Delighted, he murmured: “Yes.” The two of them sat down at the piano, Jean-Christophe perched this time on a pile of big books, and very attentively he took his first lesson. He learned first of all that the buzzing spirits have strange names, like Chinese names, of one syllable, or even of one letter. He was astonished; he imagined them to be different from that: beautiful, caressing names, like the princesses in the fairy stories. He did not like the familiarity with which his father talked of them. Again, when Melchior evoked them they were not the same; they seemed to become indifferent as they rolled out from under his fingers. But Jean-Christophe was glad to learn about the relationships between them, their hierarchy, the scales, which were

like a King commanding an army, or like a band of Negroes marching in single file. He was surprised to see that each soldier, or each Negro, could become a monarch in his turn, or the head of a similar band, and that it was possible to summon whole battalions from one end to the other of the keyboard. It amused him to hold the thread which made them march. But it was a small thing compared with what he had seen at first; his enchanted forest was lost. However, he set himself to learn, for it was not tiresome, and he was surprised at his father's patience. Melchior did not weary of it either; he made him begin the same thing over again ten times. Jean-Christophe did not understand why he should take so much trouble; his father loved him, then? That was good! The boy worked away; his heart was filled with gratitude.

He would have been less docile had he known what thoughts were springing into being in his father's head. On the day when Melchior, stealing on tiptoe, had surprised the boy at the keyboard that was too high for him, he had stayed to watch him for a moment, and suddenly there had flashed upon him: "A little prodigy! . . . Why had he not thought of it? . . . What luck for the family! . . ." No doubt he had thought that the boy would be a little peasant like his mother. "It would cost nothing to try. What a great thing it would be! He would take him all over Germany, perhaps abroad. It would be a jolly life, and noble to boot." Melchior never failed to look for the nobility hidden in all he did, for it was not often that he failed to find it, after some reflection.

Strong in this assurance, immediately after supper, as soon as he had taken his last mouthful, he dumped the child once more in front of the piano, and made him go through the day's lesson until his eyes closed in weariness. Then three times the next day. Then the day after that. Then every day. Jean-Christophe soon tired of it; then he was sick to death of it; finally he could stand it no more, and tried to revolt against it. There was no point in what he was made to do: nothing but learning to run as fast as possible over the keys, by loosening the thumb, or exercising the

fourth finger, which would cling awkwardly to the two next to it. It got on his nerves; there was nothing beautiful in it. There was an end of the magic sounds, and fascinating monsters, and the universe of dreams felt in one moment. . . . Nothing but scales and exercises—dry, monotonous, dull—duller than the conversation at meal-time, which was always the same—always about the dishes, and always the same dishes. At first the child listened absently to what his father said. When he was severely reprimanded he went on with a bad grace. He paid no attention to abuse; he met it with bad temper. The last straw was when one evening he heard Melchior unfold his plans in the next room. So it was in order to put him on show like a trick animal that he was so badgered and forced every day to move bits of ivory! He was not even given time to go and see his beloved river. What was it made them so set against him? He was angry, hurt in his pride, robbed of his liberty. He decided that he would play no more, or as badly as possible, and would discourage his father. It would be hard, but at all costs he must keep his independence.

The very next lesson he began to put his plan into execution. He set himself conscientiously to hit the notes awry, or to bungle every touch. Melchior cried out, then roared, and blows began to rain. He had a heavy ruler. At every false note he struck the boy's fingers, and at the same time shouted in his ears, so that he was like to deafen him. Jean-Christophe's face twitched under the pain of it; he bit his lips to keep himself from crying, and stoically went on hitting the notes all wrong, bobbing his head down whenever he felt a blow coming. But his system was not good, and it was not long before he began to see that it was so. Melchior was as obstinate as his son, and he swore that even if they were to stay there two days and two nights he would not let him off a single note until it had been properly played. Then Jean-Christophe tried too deliberately to play wrongly, and Melchior began to suspect the trick, as he saw that the boy's hand fell heavily to one side at every note with obvious intent. The blows became more frequent; Jean-Christophe was no longer conscious of his fingers. He wept pitifully and

silently, sniffing, and swallowing down his sobs and tears. He understood that he had nothing to gain by going on like that, and that he would have to resort to desperate measures. He stopped, and, trembling at the thought of the storm which was about to let loose, he said valiantly:

"Papa, I won't play any more."

Melchior choked.

"What! What! . . ." he cried.

He took and almost broke the boy's arm with shaking it. Jean-Christophe, trembling more and more, and raising his elbow to ward off the blows, said again:

"I won't play any more. First, because I don't like being beaten. And then . . ."

He could not finish. A terrific blow knocked the wind out of him, and Melchior roared:

"Ah! you don't like being beaten? You don't like it? . . ."

Blows rained. Jean-Christophe bawled through his sobs:

"And then . . . I don't like music! . . . I don't like music! . . ."

He slipped down from his chair. Melchior roughly put him back, and knocked his knuckles against the keyboard. He cried:

"You shall play!"

And Jean-Christophe shouted:

"No! No! I won't play!"

Melchior had to surrender. He thrashed the boy, thrust him from the room, and said that he should have nothing to eat all day, or the whole month, until he had played all his exercises without a mistake. He kicked him out and slammed the door after him.

Jean-Christophe found himself on the stairs, the dark and dirty stairs, worm-eaten. A draught came through a broken pane in the skylight, and the walls were dripping. Jean-Christophe sat on one of the greasy steps; his heart was beating wildly with anger and emotion. In a low voice he cursed his father:

"Beast! That's what you are! A beast . . . a gross creature . . . a brute! Yes, a brute! . . . and I hate you, I hate

you! . . . Oh, I wish you were dead! I wish you were dead!"

His bosom swelled. He looked desperately at the sticky staircase and the spider's web swinging in the wind above the broken pane. He felt alone, lost in his misery. He looked at the gap in the banisters. . . . What if he were to throw himself down? . . . or out of the window? . . . Yes, what if he were to kill himself to punish them? How remorseful they would be! He heard the noise of his fall from the stairs. The door upstairs opened suddenly. Agonized voices cried: "He has fallen!—He has fallen!" Footsteps clattered downstairs. His father and mother threw themselves weeping upon his body. His mother sobbed: "It is your fault! You have killed him!" His father waved his arms, threw himself on his knees, beat his head against the banisters, and cried: "What a wretch am I! What a wretch am I!" The sight of all this softened his misery. He was on the point of taking pity on their grief; but then he thought that it was well for them, and he enjoyed his revenge. . . .

III

He had to surrender. In spite of an obstinate and heroic resistance, blows triumphed over his ill-will. Every morning for three hours, and for three hours every evening, Jean-Christophe was set before the instrument of torture. All on edge with attention and weariness, with large tears rolling down his cheeks and nose, he moved his little red hands over the black and white keys—his hands were often stiff with cold—under the threatening ruler, which descended at every false note, and the harangues of his master, which were more odious to him than the blows. He thought that he hated music. And yet he applied himself to it with a zest which fear of Melchior did not altogether explain. Certain words of his grandfather had made an impression on him. The old man, seeing his grandson weeping, had told him, with that gravity which he always maintained for

the boy, that it was worth while suffering a little for the most beautiful and noble art given to men for their consolation and glory. And Jean-Christophe, who was grateful to his grandfather for talking to him like a man, had been secretly touched by these simple words, which sorted well with his childish stoicism and growing pride. But, more than by argument, he was bound and enslaved by the memory of certain musical emotions, bound and enslaved to the detested art, against which he tried in vain to rebel.

There was in the town, as usual in Germany, a theater, where opera, opéra-comique, operetta, drama, comedy, and vaudeville are presented—every sort of play of every style and fashion. There were performances three times a week from six to nine in the evening. Old Jean Michel never missed one, and was equally interested in everything. Once he took his grandson with him. Little Jean-Christophe was overwhelmed by his emotion. There were words, gestures, musical phrases which disturbed him; he dared not then raise his eyes; he knew not whether it were well or ill; he blushed and grew pale by turns; sometimes there came drops of sweat upon his brow, and he was fearful lest all the people there should see his distress. When the catastrophe came about which inevitably breaks upon lovers in the fourth act of an opera so as to provide the tenor and the *prima donna* with an opportunity for showing off their shrillest screams, the child thought he must choke; his throat hurt him as though he had caught cold; he clutched at his neck with his hands, and could not swallow his saliva; tears welled up in him; his hands and feet were frozen. Fortunately, his grandfather was not much less moved. He enjoyed the theater with a childish simplicity. During the dramatic passages he coughed carelessly to hide his distress, but Jean-Christophe saw it, and it delighted him. It was horribly hot; Jean-Christophe was dropping with sleep, and he was very uncomfortable. But he thought only: "Is there much longer? It cannot be finished!" Then suddenly it was finished, without his knowing why. The curtain fell; the audience rose; the enchantment was broken.

They went home through the night, the two children—

the old man and the little boy. What a fine night! What a serene moonlight! They said nothing; they were turning over their memories. At last the old man said:

"Did you like it, boy?"

Jean-Christophe could not reply; he was still fearful from emotion, and he would not speak, so as not to break the spell; he had to make an effort to whisper, with a sigh:

"Oh yes."

The old man smiled. After a time he went on:

"It's a fine thing—a musician's trade! To create things like that, such marvelous spectacles—is there anything more glorious? It is to be God on earth!"

The boy's mind leaped to that. What! a man had made all that! That had not occurred to him. It had seemed that it must have made itself, must be the work of Nature. A man, a musician, such as he would be some day! Oh, to be that for one day, only one day! And then afterwards . . . afterwards, whatever you like! Die, if necessary! He asked:

"What man made that, grandfather?"

The old man told him of François Marie Hassler, a young German artist who lived at Berlin. He had known him once. Jean-Christophe listened, all ears. Suddenly he said:

"And you, grandfather?"

The old man trembled.

"What?" he asked.

"Did you do things like that—you too?"

"Certainly," said the old man a little crossly.

He was silent, and after they had walked a little he sighed heavily. It was one of the sorrows of his life. He had always longed to write for the theater, and inspiration had always betrayed him. He had in his desk one or two acts written, but he had so little illusion as to their worth that he had never dared to submit them to an outside judgment.

They said no more until they reached home. Neither slept. The old man was troubled. He took his Bible for consolation. In bed Jean-Christophe turned over and over the events of the evening; he recollected the smallest details. As he dozed off a musical phrase rang in his ears as dis-

tinctly as if the orchestra were there. All his body leaped; he sat up upon his pillow, his head buzzing with music, and he thought: "Some day I also shall write. Oh, can I ever do it?"

Some time after that a musical event brought even more excitement into Jean-Christophe's thoughts. François Marie Hassler, the author of the first opera which had so bowled him over, was to visit the town. He was to conduct a concert consisting of his compositions. The town was excited. The young musician was the subject of violent discussion in Germany, and for a fortnight he was the only topic of conversation. It was a different matter when he arrived. The friends of Melchior and old Jean Michel continually came for news, and they went away with the most extravagant notions of the musician's habits and eccentricities. The child followed these narratives with eager attention. The idea that the great man was there in the town, breathing the same air as himself, treading the same stones, threw him into a state of dumb exaltation. He lived only in the hope of seeing him.

Hassler was staying at the Palace as the guest of the Grand Duke. He hardly went out, except to the theater for rehearsals, to which Jean-Christophe was not admitted, and as he was very lazy, he went to and fro in the Prince's carriage. Therefore, Jean-Christophe did not have many opportunities of seeing him, and he only succeeded once in catching sight of him as he drove in the carriage.

At length Jean-Christophe was able to approach his hero. It was the day of the concert. All the town was there. The Grand Duke and his Court occupied the great royal box, surmounted with a crown supported by two chubby cherubims. The theater was in gala array. The stage was decorated with branches of oak and flowering laurel. All the musicians of any account made it a point of honor to take their places in the orchestra. Melchior was at his post, and Jean Michel was conducting the chorus.

When Hassler appeared there was loud applause from every part of the house, and the ladies rose to see him

better. Jean-Christophe devoured him with his eyes. Hassler had a young, sensitive face, though it was already rather puffy and tired-looking; his temples were bald, and his hair was thin on the crown of his head; for the rest, fair, curly hair. His blue eyes looked vague. He had a little fair mustache and an expressive mouth, which was rarely still, but twitched with a thousand imperceptible movements. He was tall, and held himself badly—not from awkwardness, but from weariness or boredom. He conducted capriciously and lithely, with his whole awkward body swaying, like his music, with gestures, now caressing, now sharp and jerky. It was easy to see that he was very nervous, and his music was the exact reflection of himself. The quivering and jerky life of it broke through the usual apathy of the orchestra. Jean-Christophe breathed heavily; in spite of his fear of drawing attention to himself, he could not stand still in his place; he fidgeted, got up, and the music gave him such violent and unexpected shocks that he had to move his head, arms, and legs, to the great discomfort of his neighbors, who warded off his kicks as best they could. The whole audience was enthusiastic, fascinated by the success, rather than by the compositions. At the end there was a storm of applause and cries, in which the trumpets in the orchestra joined, German fashion, with their triumphant blare in salute of the conqueror. Jean-Christophe trembled with pride, as though these honors were for himself. He enjoyed seeing Hassler's face light up with childish pleasure. The ladies threw flowers, the men waved their hats, and the audience rushed for the platform. Every one wanted to shake the master's hand. Jean-Christophe saw one enthusiast raise the master's hand to his lips, another steal a handkerchief that Hassler had left on the corner of his desk. He wanted to reach the platform also, although he did not know why, for if at that moment he had found himself near Hassler, he would have fled at once in terror and emotion. But he butted with all his force, like a ram, among the skirts and legs that divided him from Hassler. He was too small; he could not break through.

Fortunately, when the concert was over, his grand-

father came and took him to join in a party to serenade Hassler. It was night, and torches were lighted. All the musicians of the orchestra were there. They talked only of the marvelous compositions they had heard. They arrived outside the Palace, and took up their places without a sound under the master's windows. They took on an air of secrecy, although everybody, including Hassler, knew what was to come. In the silence of the night they began to play certain famous fragments of Hassler's compositions. He appeared at the window with the Prince, and they roared in their honor. Both bowed. A servant came from the Prince to invite the musicians to enter the Palace. They passed through great rooms, with frescoes representing naked men with helmets; they were of a reddish color, and were making gestures of defiance. The sky was covered with great clouds like sponges. There were also men and women of marble clad in waist-cloths made of iron. The guests walked on carpets so thick that their tread was inaudible, and they came at length to a room which was as light as day, and there were tables laden with drinks and good things.

The Grand Duke was there, but Jean-Christophe did not see him; he had eyes only for Hassler. Hassler came towards them; he thanked them. He picked his words carefully, stopped awkwardly in the middle of a sentence, and extricated himself with a quip which made everybody laugh. They began to eat. Hassler took four or five musicians aside. He singled out Jean-Christophe's grandfather, and addressed very flattering words to him: he recollected that Jean Michel had been one of the first to perform his works, and he said that he had often heard tell of his excellence from a friend of his who had been a pupil of the old man's. Jean-Christophe's grandfather expressed his gratitude profusely; he replied with such extraordinary eulogy that, in spite of his adoration of Hassler, the boy was ashamed. But to Hassler they seemed to be pleasant and in the rational order. Finally, the old man, who had lost himself in his rigmarole, took Jean-Christophe by the hand, and presented him to Hassler. Hassler smiled at Jean-Christophe, and

carelessly patted his head, and when he learned that the boy liked his music, and had not slept for several nights in anticipation of seeing him, he took him in his arms and plied him with questions. Jean-Christophe, struck dumb and blushing with pleasure, dared not look at him. Hassler took him by the chin and lifted his face up. Jean-Christophe ventured to look. Hassler's eyes were kind and smiling; he began to smile too. Then he felt so happy, so wonderfully happy in the great man's arms, that he burst into tears. Hassler was touched by this simple affection, and was more kind than ever. He kissed the boy and talked to him tenderly. At the same time he said funny things and tickled him to make him laugh; and Jean-Christophe could not help laughing through his tears. Soon he became at ease, and answered Hassler readily, and of his own accord he began to whisper in his ear all his small ambitions, as though he and Hassler were old friends; he told him how he wanted to be a musician like Hassler, and, like Hassler, to make beautiful things, and to be a great man. He, who was always ashamed, talked confidently; he did not know what he was saying; he was in a sort of ecstasy. Hassler smiled at his prattling and said:

"When you are a man, and have become a good musician, you shall come and see me in Berlin. I shall make something of you."

Jean-Christophe was too delighted to reply.

Hassler teased him.

"You don't want to?"

Jean-Christophe nodded his head violently five or six times meaning "Yes."

"It is a bargain, then?"

Jean-Christophe nodded again.

"Kiss me, then."

Jean-Christophe threw his arms round Hassler's neck and hugged him with all his strength.

"Oh, you are wetting me! Let go! Your nose wants wiping!"

Hassler laughed, and wiped the boy's nose himself, a little self-consciously, though he was quite jolly. He put

him down, then took him by the hand and led him to a table, where he filled his pockets with cake, and left him, saying:

“Good-bye! Remember your promise.”

Jean-Christophe swam in happiness. The rest of the world had ceased to exist for him. He could remember nothing of what had happened earlier in the evening; he followed lovingly Hassler’s every expression and gesture.

The brilliant meteor which had flashed across the sky of the little town that night had a decisive influence on Jean-Christophe’s mind. All his childhood Hassler was the model on which his eyes were fixed, and to follow his example the little man of six decided that he also would write music. To tell the truth, he had been doing so for long enough without knowing it, and he had not waited to be conscious of composing before he composed.

Everything is music for the born musician. Everything that throbs, or moves, or stirs, or palpitates—sunlit summer days, nights when the wind howls, flickering light, the twinkling of the stars, storms, the song of birds, the buzzing of insects, the murmuring of trees, voices, loved or loathed, familiar fireside sounds, a creaking door, blood moving in the veins in the silence of the night—everything that is music; all that is needed is that it should be heard. All the music of creation found its echo in Jean-Christophe. Everything that he saw, everything that he felt, was translated into music without his being conscious of it. He was like a buzzing hive of bees. But no one noticed it, himself least of all.

Like all children, he hummed perpetually at every hour of the day. Whatever he was doing—whether he were walking in the street, hopping on one foot, or lying on the floor at his grandfather’s, with his head in his hands, absorbed in the pictures of a book, or sitting in his little chair in the darkest corner of the kitchen, dreaming aimlessly in the twilight—always the monotonous murmuring of his little trumpet was to be heard, played with lips closed and cheeks blown out. His mother seldom paid any heed to it, but, once in a while, she would protest.

When he was tired of this state of half-sleep he would have to move and make a noise. Then he made music, singing it at the top of his voice. He had made tunes for every occasion. He had a tune for splashing in his wash-basin in the morning, like a little duck. He had a tune for sitting on the piano-stool in front of the detested instrument, and another for getting off it, and this was a more brilliant affair than the other. He had one for his mother putting the soup on the table; he used to go before her then blowing a blare of trumpets. He played triumphal marches by which to go solemnly from the dining-room to the bedroom. Sometimes he would organize little processions with his two small brothers; all then would file out gravely, one after another, and each had a tune to march to. But, as was right and proper, Jean-Christophe kept the best for himself. Every one of his tunes was strictly appropriated to its special occasion, and Jean-Christophe never by any chance confused them. Anybody else would have made mistakes, but he knew the shades of difference between them exactly.

One day at his grandfather's house he was going round the room clicking his heels, head up and chest out; he went round and round and round, so that it was a wonder he did not turn sick, and played one of his compositions. The old man, who was shaving, stopped in the middle of it, and, with his face covered with lather, came to look at him, and said:

"What are you singing, boy?"

Jean-Christophe said he did not know.

"Sing it again!" said Jean Michel.

Jean-Christophe tried; he could not remember the tune. Proud of having attracted his grandfather's attention, he tried to make him admire his voice, and sang after his own fashion an air from some opera, but that was not what the old man wanted. Jean Michel said nothing, and seemed not to notice him any more. But he left the door of his room ajar while the boy was playing alone in the next room.

A few days later Jean-Christophe, with the chairs arranged about him, was playing a comedy in music, which

he had made up of scraps that he remembered from the theater, and he was making steps and bows, as he had seen them done in a minuet, and addressing himself to the portrait of Beethoven which hung above the table. As he turned with a pirouette he saw his grandfather watching him through the half-open door. He thought the old man was laughing at him; he was abashed, and stopped dead; he ran to the window, and pressed his face against the panes, pretending that he had been watching something of the greatest interest. But the old man said nothing; he came to him and kissed him, and Jean-Christophe saw that he was pleased. His vanity made the most of these signs; he was clever enough to see that he had been appreciated; but he did not know exactly which his grandfather had admired most—his talent as a dramatic author, or as a musician, or as a singer, or as a dancer. He inclined to the latter, for he prided himself on this.

A week later, when he had forgotten the whole affair, his grandfather said mysteriously that he had something to show him. He opened his desk, took out a music-book, and put it on the rack of the piano, and told the boy to play. Jean-Christophe was very much interested, and deciphered it fairly well. The notes were written by hand in the old man's large handwriting, and he had taken especial pains with it. The headings were adorned with scrolls and flourishes. After some moments the old man, who was sitting beside Jean-Christophe turning the pages for him, asked him what the music was. Jean-Christophe had been too much absorbed in his playing to notice what he had played, and said that he did not know it.

"Listen! . . . You don't know it?"

Yes; he thought he knew it, but he did not know where he had heard it. The old man laughed.

"Think."

Jean-Christophe shook his head.

"I don't know."

A light was fast dawning in his mind; it seemed to him that the air . . . But, no! He dared not. . . . He would not recognize it.

"I don't know, grandfather."

He blushed.

"What, you little fool, don't you see that it is your own?"

He was sure of it, but to hear it said made his heart thump.

"Oh! grandfather! . . ."

Beaming, the old man showed him the book.

"See: *Aria*. It is what you were singing on Tuesday when you were lying on the floor. *March*. That is what I asked you to sing again last week, and you could not remember it. *Minuet*. That is what you were dancing by the armchair. Look!"

On the cover was written in wonderful Gothic letters:

The Pleasures of Childhood: Aria, Minuetto, Valse, and Marcia, Op. 1, by Jean-Christophe Kraftt."

Jean-Christophe was dazzled by it. To see his name, and that fine title, and that large book—his work! . . . He went on murmuring:

"Oh! grandfather! grandfather! . . ."

The old man drew him to him. Jean-Christophe threw himself on his knees, and hid his head in Jean Michel's bosom. He was covered with blushes from his happiness. The old man was even happier, and went on, in a voice which he tried to make indifferent, for he felt that he was on the point of breaking down:

"Of course, I added the accompaniment and the harmony to fit the song. And then"—he coughed—"and then, I added a *trio* to the minuet, because . . . because it is usual . . . and then . . . I think it is not at all bad."

He played it. Jean-Christophe was very proud of collaborating with his grandfather.

"But, grandfather, you must put your name to it too."

"It is not worth while. It is not worth while others besides yourself knowing it. Only"—here his voice trembled—"only, later on, when I am no more, it will remind you of your old grandfather . . . eh? You won't forget him?"

The poor old man did not say that he had been unable to resist the quite innocent pleasure of introducing one of his own unfortunate airs into his grandson's work, which

he felt was destined to survive him; but his desire to share in this imaginary glory was very humble and very touching, since it was enough for him anonymously to transmit to posterity a scrap of his own thought, so as not altogether to perish. Jean-Christophe was touched by it, and covered his face with kisses, and the old man, growing more and more tender, kissed his hair.

"You will remember me? Later on, when you are a good musician, a great artist, who will bring honor to his family, to his art, and to his country, when you are famous, you will remember that it was your old grandfather who first perceived it, and foretold what you would be?"

There were tears in his eyes as he listened to his own words. He was reluctant to let such signs of weakness be seen. He had an attack of coughing, became moody, and sent the boy away hugging the precious manuscript.

Jean-Christophe went home bewildered by his happiness. The stones danced about him. The reception he had from his family sobered him a little. When he blurted out the splendor of his musical exploit they cried out upon him. His mother laughed at him. Melchior declared that the old man was mad, and that he would do better to take care of himself than to set about turning the boy's head. As for Jean-Christophe, he would oblige by putting such follies from his mind, and sitting down *illico* at the piano and playing exercises for four hours. He must first learn to play properly; and as for composing, there was plenty of time for that later on when he had nothing better to do.

Melchior was not, as these words of wisdom might indicate, trying to keep the boy from the dangerous exaltation of a too early pride. On the contrary, he proved immediately that this was not so. But never having himself had any idea to express in music, and never having had the least need to express an idea, he had come, as a *virtuoso*, to consider composing a secondary matter, which was only given value by the art of the executant. He was not insensible of the tremendous enthusiasm roused by great composers like Hassler. For such ovations he had the respect which he always paid to success—mingled, perhaps, with

a little secret jealousy—for it seemed to him that such applause was stolen from him. But he knew by experience that the successes of the great *virtuosi* are no less remarkable, and are more personal in character, and therefore more fruitful of agreeable and flattering consequences. He affected to pay profound homage to the genius of the master musicians; but he took a great delight in telling absurd anecdotes of them, presenting their intelligence and morals in a lamentable light. He placed the *virtuoso* at the top of the artistic ladder, for, he said, it is well known that the tongue is the noblest member of the body, and what would thought be without words? What would music be without the executant? But whatever may have been the reason for the scolding that he gave Jean-Christophe, it was not without its uses in restoring some common sense to the boy, who was almost beside himself with his grandfather's praises. It was not quite enough. Jean-Christophe, of course, decided that his grandfather was much cleverer than his father, and though he sat down at the piano without sulking, he did so not so much for the sake of obedience as to be able to dream in peace, as he always did while his fingers ran mechanically over the keyboard. While he played his interminable exercises he heard a proud voice inside himself saying over and over again: "I am a composer—a great composer."

From that day on, since he was a composer, he set himself to composing. Before he had even learned to write, he continued to cipher crotchets and quavers on scraps of paper, which he tore from the household account-books. But in the effort to find out what he was thinking, and to set it down in black and white, he arrived at thinking nothing, except when he wanted to think something. But he did not for that give up making musical phrases, and as he was a born musician he made them somehow, even if they meant nothing at all. Then he would take them in triumph to his grandfather, who wept with joy over them—he wept easily now that he was growing old—and vowed that they were wonderful.

All this was like to spoil him altogether. Fortunately, his

own good sense saved him, helped by the influence of a man who made no pretension of having any influence over anybody, and set nothing before the eyes of the world but a common-sense point of view. This man was Louisa's brother.

Like her, he was small, thin, puny, and rather round-shouldered. No one knew exactly how old he was; he could not be more than forty, but he looked more than fifty. He had a little wrinkled face, with a pink complexion, and kind pale blue eyes, like faded forget-me-nots. When he took off his cap, which he used fussily to wear everywhere from his fear of draughts, he exposed a little pink bald head, conical in shape, which was the great delight of Jean-Christophe and his brothers. They never left off teasing him about it, asking him what he had done with his hair, and, encouraged by Melchior's pleasantries, threatening to smack it. He was the first to laugh at them, and put up with their treatment of him patiently. He was a peddler; he used to go from village to village with a pack on his back, containing everything—groceries, stationery, confectionery, handkerchiefs, scarves, shoes, pickles, almanacs, songs, and drugs. Several attempts had been made to make him settle down, and to buy him a little business—a store or a drapery shop. But he could not do it. One night he would get up, push the key under the door, and set off again with his pack. Weeks and months went by before he was seen again. Then he would reappear. Some evening they would hear him fumbling at the door; it would half open, and the little bald head, politely uncovered, would appear with its kind eyes and timid smile. He would say, "Good-evening, everybody," carefully wipe his shoes before entering, salute everybody, beginning with the eldest, and go and sit in the most remote corner of the room. There he would light his pipe, and sit huddled up, waiting quietly until the usual storm of questions was over. The two Kraffts, Jean-Christophe's father and grandfather, had a jeering contempt for him. The little freak seemed ridiculous to them, and their pride was touched by the low degree of the peddler. They made him feel it, but he seemed to take no notice of it, and showed them a profound respect which disarmed them, es-

pecially the old man, who was very sensitive to what people thought of him. They used to crush him with heavy pleasantries, which often brought the blush to Louisa's cheeks. Accustomed to bow without dispute to the intellectual superiority of the Kraffts, she had no doubt that her husband and father-in-law were right; but she loved her brother, and her brother had for her a dumb adoration. They were the only members of their family, and they were both humble, crushed, and thrust aside by life; they were united in sadness and tenderness by a bond of mutual pity and common suffering, borne in secret. With the Kraffts—robust, noisy, brutal, solidly built for living, and living joyously—these two weak, kindly creatures, out of their setting, so to speak, outside life, understood and pitied each other without ever saying anything about it.

Jean-Christophe, with the cruel carelessness of childhood, shared the contempt of his father and grandfather for the little peddler. He made fun of him, and treated him as a comic figure; he worried him with stupid teasing, which his uncle bore with his unshakable phlegm. But Jean-Christophe loved him, without quite knowing why. He loved him first of all as a plaything with which he did what he liked. He loved him also because he always gave him something nice—a dainty, a picture, an amusing toy. The little man's return was a joy for the children, for he always had some surprise for them. Poor as he was, he always contrived to bring them each a present, and he never forgot the birthday of any one of the family. He always turned up on these august days, and brought out of his pocket some jolly present, lovingly chosen. They were so used to it that they hardly thought of thanking him; it seemed natural, and he appeared to be sufficiently repaid by the pleasure he had given. But Jean-Christophe, who did not sleep very well, and during the night used to turn over in his mind the events of the day, used sometimes to think that his uncle was very kind, and he used to be filled with floods of gratitude to the poor man. He never showed it when the day came, because he thought that the others would laugh at him. Besides, he was too little to see in kindness all the

rare value that it has. In the language of children, kind and stupid are almost synonymous, and Uncle Gottfried seemed to be the living proof of it.

One evening when Melchior was dining out, Gottfried was left alone in the living-room, while Louisa put the children to bed. He went out, and sat by the river a few yards away from the house. Jean-Christophe, having nothing better to do, followed him, and, as usual, tormented him with his puppy tricks until he was out of breath, and dropped down on the grass at his feet. Lying on his belly, he buried his nose in the turf. When he had recovered his breath, he cast about for some new crazy thing to say. When he found it he shouted it out, and rolled about with laughing, with his face still buried in the earth. He received no answer. Surprised by the silence, he raised his head, and began to repeat his joke. He saw Gottfried's face lit up by the last beams of the setting sun cast through golden mists. He swallowed down his words. Gottfried smiled with his eyes half closed and his mouth half open, and in his sorrowful face was an expression of sadness and unutterable melancholy. Jean-Christophe, with his face in his hands, watched him. The night came; little by little Gottfried's face disappeared. Silence reigned. Jean-Christophe in his turn was filled with the mysterious impressions which had been reflected on Gottfried's face. He fell into a vague stupor. The earth was in darkness, the sky was bright; the stars peeped out. The little waves of the river chattered against the bank. The boy grew sleepy. Without seeing them, he bit off little blades of grass. A grasshopper chirped near him. It seemed to him that he was going to sleep.

Suddenly, in the dark, Gottfried began to sing. He sang in a weak, husky voice, as though to himself; he could not have been heard twenty yards away. But there was sincerity and emotion in his voice; it was as though he were thinking aloud, and that through the song, as through clear water, the very inmost heart of him was to be seen. Never had Jean Christophe heard such singing, and never had he heard such a song. Slow, simple, childish, it moved gravely, sadly, a little monotonously, never hurrying—with long

pauses—then setting out again on its way, careless where it arrived, and losing itself in the night. It seemed to come from far away, and it went no man knows whither. Its serenity was full of sorrow, and beneath its seeming peace there dwelt an agony of the ages. Jean-Christophe held his breath; he dared not move; he was cold with emotion. When it was done he crawled towards Gottfried, and in a choking voice said:

"Uncle!"

Gottfried did not reply.

"Uncle!" repeated the boy, placing his hands and chin on Gottfried's knees.

Gottfried said kindly:

"Well, boy . . ."

"What is it, uncle? Tell me! What were you singing?"

"I don't know."

"Tell me what it is!"

"I don't know. Just a song."

"A song that you made."

"No, not I! What an idea! . . . It is an old song."

"Who made it?"

"No one knows. . . ."

"When?"

"No one knows. . . ."

"When you were little?"

"Before I was born, before my father was born, and before his father, and before his father's father. . . . It has always been."

"How strange! No one has ever told me about it."

He thought for a moment.

"Uncle, do you know any other?"

"Yes."

"Sing another, please."

"Why should I sing another? One is enough. One sings when one wants to sing, when one has to sing. One must not sing for the fun of it."

"But what about when one makes music?"

"That is not music."

The boy was lost in thought. He did not quite understand.

But he asked for no explanation. It was true, it was not music, not like all the rest. He went on:

"Uncle, have you ever made them?"

"Made what?"

"Songs!"

"Songs? Oh! How should I make them? They can't be made."

With his usual logic the boy insisted:

"But, uncle, it must have been made once. . . ."

Gottfried shook his head obstinately.

"It has always been."

The boy returned to the attack:

"But, uncle, isn't it possible to make other songs, new songs?"

"Why make them? There are enough for everything. There are songs for when you are sad, and for when you are gay; for when you are weary, and for when you are thinking of home; for when you despise yourself, because you have been a vile sinner, a worm upon the earth; for when you want to weep, because people have not been kind to you; and for when your heart is glad because the world is beautiful, and you see God's heaven, which, like Him, is always kind, and seems to laugh at you. . . . There are songs for everything, everything. Why should I make them?"

"To be a great man!" said the boy, full of his grandfather's teaching and his simple dreams.

Gottfried laughed softly. Jean-Christophe, a little hurt, asked him:

"Why are you laughing?"

Gottfried said:

"Oh! I? . . . I am nobody."

He kissed the boy's head, and said:

"You want to be a great man?"

"Yes," said Jean-Christophe proudly. He thought Gottfried would admire him. But Gottfried replied:

"What for?"

Jean-Christophe was taken aback. He thought for a moment, and said:

"To make beautiful songs!"

Gottfried laughed again, and said:

"You want to make beautiful songs, so as to be a great man; and you want to be a great man, so as to make beautiful songs. You are like a dog chasing its own tail."

Jean-Christophe was dashed. At any other time he would not have borne his uncle laughing at him, he at whom he was used to laughing. And, at the same time, he would never have thought Gottfried clever enough to stump him with an argument. He cast about for some answer or some impertinence to throw at him, but could find none. Gottfried went on:

"When you are as great as from here to Coblenz, you will never make a single song."

Jean-Christophe revolted on that.

"And if I will! . . ."

"The more you want to, the less you can. To make songs, you have to be like those creatures. Listen. . . ."

The moon had risen, round and gleaming, behind the fields. A silvery mist hovered above the ground and the shimmering waters. The frogs croaked, and in the meadows the melodious fluting of the toads arose. The shrill tremolo of the grasshoppers seemed to answer the twinkling of the stars. The wind rustled softly in the branches of the alders. From the hills above the river there came down the sweet light song of a nightingale.

"What need is there to sing?" sighed Gottfried, after a long silence. (It was not clear whether he were talking to himself or to Jean-Christophe.) "Don't they sing sweeter than anything that you could make?"

Jean-Christophe had often heard these sounds of the night, and he loved them. But never had he heard them as he heard them now. It was true: what need was there to sing? . . . His heart was full of tenderness and sorrow. He was fain to embrace the meadows, the river, the sky, the clear stars. He was filled with love for his uncle Gottfried, who seemed to him now the best, the cleverest, the most beautiful of men. He thought how he had misjudged him, and he thought that his uncle was sad because he,

Jean-Christophe, had misjudged him. He was remorseful. He wanted to cry out: "Uncle, do not be sad! I will not be naughty again. Forgive me, I love you!" But he dared not. And suddenly he threw himself into Gottfried's arms, but the words would not come, only he repeated, "I love you!" and kissed him passionately. Gottfried was surprised and touched, and went on saying, "What? What?" and kissed him. Then he got up, took him by the hand, and said: "We must go in." Jean-Christophe was sad because his uncle had not understood him. But as they came to the house, Gottfried said: "If you like we'll go again to hear God's music, and I will sing you some more songs." And when Jean-Christophe kissed him gratefully as they said good-night, he saw that his uncle had understood.

Thereafter they often went for walks together in the evening, and they walked without a word along by the river, or through the fields. Gottfried slowly smoked his pipe, and Jean-Christophe, a little frightened by the darkness, would give him his hand. They would sit down on the grass, and after a few moments of silence Gottfried would talk to him about the stars and the clouds; he taught him to distinguish the breathing of the earth, air, and water, the songs, cries, and sounds of the little worlds of flying, creeping, hopping, and swimming things swarming in the darkness, and the signs of rain and fine weather, and the countless instruments of the symphony of the night. Sometimes Gottfried would sing tunes, sad or gay, but always of the same kind, and always in the end Jean-Christophe would be brought to the same sorrow. But he would never sing more than one song in an evening, and Jean-Christophe noticed that he did not sing gladly when he was asked to do so; it had to come of itself, just when he wanted to. Sometimes they had to wait for a long time without speaking, and just when Jean-Christophe was beginning to think, "He is not going to sing this evening," Gottfried would make up his mind.

One evening, when nothing would induce Gottfried to sing, Jean-Christophe thought of submitting to him one of his own small compositions, in the making of which he

found so much trouble and pride. He wanted to show what an artist he was. Gottfried listened very quietly, and then said:

"That is very ugly, my poor dear Jean-Christophe!"

Jean-Christophe was so hurt that he could find nothing to say. Gottfried went on pityingly:

"Why did you do it? It is so ugly! No one forced you to do it."

Hot with anger, Jean-Christophe protested:

"My grandfather thinks my music fine."

"Ah!" said Gottfried, not turning a hair. "No doubt he is right. He is a learned man. He knows all about music. I know nothing about it. . . ."

And after a moment:

"But I think that is very ugly."

He looked quietly at Jean-Christophe, and saw his angry face, and smiled, and said:

"Have you composed any others? Perhaps I shall like the others better than that."

Jean-Christophe thought that his other compositions might wipe out the impression of the first, and he sang them all. Gottfried said nothing; he waited until they were finished. Then he shook his head, and with profound conviction said:

"They are even more ugly."

Jean-Christophe shut his lips, and his chin trembled; he wanted to cry. Gottfried went on as though he himself were upset.

"How ugly they are!"

Jean-Christophe, with tears in his voice, cried out:

"But why do you say they are ugly?"

Gottfried looked at him with his frank eyes.

"Why? . . . I don't know. . . . Wait. . . . They are ugly . . . first, because they are stupid. . . . Yes, that's it. . . . They are stupid, they don't mean anything. . . . You see? When you wrote, you had nothing to say. Why did you write them?"

"I don't know," said Jean-Christophe, in a piteous voice. "I wanted to write something pretty."

"There you are! You wrote for the sake of writing. You wrote because you wanted to be a great musician, and to be admired. You have been proud; you have been a liar; you have been punished. . . . You see! A man is always punished when he is proud and a liar in music. Music must be modest and sincere—or else, what is it? Impious, a blasphemy of the Lord, who has given us song to tell the honest truth."

He saw the boy's distress, and tried to kiss him. But Jean-Christophe turned angrily away, and for several days he sulked. He hated Gottfried. But it was in vain that he said over and over to himself: "He is an ass! He knows nothing—nothing! My grandfather, who is much cleverer, likes my music." In his heart he knew that his uncle was right, and Gottfried's words were graven on his inmost soul; he was ashamed to have been a liar.

And, in spite of his resentment, he always thought of it when he was writing music, and often he tore up what he had written, being ashamed already of what Gottfried would have thought of it. When he got over it, and wrote a melody which he knew to be not quite sincere, he hid it carefully from his uncle; he was fearful of his judgment, and was quite happy when Gottfried just said of one of his pieces: "That is not so very ugly. . . . I like it. . . ."

Sometimes, by way of revenge, he used to trick him by giving him as his own melodies from the great musicians, and he was delighted when it happened that Gottfried disliked them heartily. But that did not trouble Gottfried. He would laugh loudly when he saw Jean-Christophe clap his hands and dance about him delightedly, and he always returned to his usual argument: "It is well enough written, but it says nothing." He always refused to be present at one of the little concerts given in Melchior's house. However beautiful the music might be, he would begin to yawn and look sleepy with boredom. Very soon he would be unable to bear it any longer, and would steal away quietly. He used to say:

"You see, my boy, everything that you write in the house is not music. Music in a house is like sunshine in a room.

Music is to be found outside where you breathe God's dear fresh air."

He was always talking of God, for he was very pious, unlike the two Kraffts, father and son, who were free-thinkers, and took care to eat meat on Fridays.

Suddenly, for no apparent reason, Melchior changed his opinion. Not only did he approve of his father having put together Jean-Christophe's inspirations, but, to the boy's great surprise, he spent several evenings in making two or three copies of his manuscript. To every question put to him on the subject, he replied impressively, "We shall see; . . ." or he would rub his hands and laugh, smack the boy's head by way of a joke, or turn him up and blithely spank him. Jean-Christophe loathed these familiarities, but he saw that his father was pleased, and did not know why.

Then there were mysterious confabulations between Melchior and his father. And one evening Jean-Christophe, to his astonishment, learned that he, Jean-Christophe, had dedicated to H.S.H. the Grand Duke Leopold the *Pleasures of Childhood*. Melchior had sounded the disposition of the Prince, who had shown himself graciously inclined to accept the homage. Thereupon Melchior declared that without losing a moment they must, *primo*, draw up the official request to the Prince; *secondo*, publish the work; *tertio*, organize a concert to give it a hearing.

There were further long conferences between Melchior and Jean Michel. They argued heatedly for two or three evenings. It was forbidden to interrupt them. Melchior wrote, erased; erased, wrote. The old man talked loudly, as though he were reciting verses. Sometimes they squabbled or thumped on the table because they could not find a word.

Then Jean-Christophe was called, made to sit at the table with a pen in his hand, his father on his right, his grandfather on his left, and the old man began to dictate words which he did not understand, because he found it difficult to write every word in his enormous letters, because Melchior was shouting in his ear, and because the old man

declaimed with such emphasis that Jean-Christophe, put out by the sound of the words, could not bother to listen to their meaning. The old man was no less in a state of emotion. He could not sit still, and he walked up and down the room, involuntarily illustrating the text of what he read with gestures, but he came every minute to look over what the boy had written, and Jean-Christophe, frightened by the two large faces looking over his shoulder, put out his tongue, and held his pen clumsily. A mist floated before his eyes; he made too many strokes, or smudged what he had written; and Melchior roared, and Jean Michel stormed; and he had to begin again, and then again, and when he thought that they had at last come to an end, a great blot fell on the immaculate page. Then they pulled his ears, and he burst into tears; but they forbade him to weep, because he was spoiling the paper, and they began to dictate, beginning all over again, and he thought it would go on like that to the end of his life.

At last it was finished, and Jean Michel leaned against the mantelpiece, and read over their handiwork in a voice trembling with pleasure, while Melchior sat straddled across a chair, and looked at the ceiling and wagged his chair and, as a connoisseur, rolled round his tongue the style of the following epistle:

*"Most Noble and Sublime Highness! Most
Gracious Lord!*

"From my fourth year Music has been the first occupation of my childish days. So soon as I allied myself to the noble Muse, who roused my soul to pure harmony, I loved her, and, as it seemed to me, she returned my love. Now I am in my sixth year, and for some time my Muse in hours of inspiration has whispered in my ears: 'Be bold! Be bold! Write down the harmonies of thy soul!' 'Six years old,' thought I, 'and how should I be bold? What would the learned in the art say of me?' I hesitated. I trembled. But my Muse insisted. I obeyed. I wrote.

“And now shall I,

O Most Sublime Highness!

—shall I have the temerity and audacity to place upon the steps of Thy Throne the first-fruits of my youthful labors? . . . Shall I make so bold as to hope that Thou wilt let fall upon them the august approbation of Thy paternal regard? . . .

“Oh, yes! For Science and the Arts have ever found in Thee their sage Mæcenas, their generous champion, and talent puts forth its flowers under the ægis of Thy holy protection.

“In this profound and certain faith I dare, then, approach Thee with these youthful efforts. Receive them as a pure offering of my childish veneration, and of Thy goodness deign,

O Most Sublime Highness!

to glance at them, and at their young author, who bows at Thy feet deeply and in humility!

“From the most submissive, faithful, and obedient servant of His Most Noble and Most Sublime Highness,

“JEAN-CHRISTOPHE KRAFFT”

Jean-Christophe heard nothing. He was very happy to have finished, and, fearing that he would be made to begin again, he ran away to the fields. He had no idea of what he had written, and he cared not at all. But when the old man had finished his reading he began again to taste the full flavor of it, and when the second reading came to an end Melchior and he declared that it was a little masterpiece. That was also the opinion of the Grand Duke, to whom the letter was presented, with a copy of the musical work. He was kind enough to send word that he found both

quite charming. He granted permission for the concert, and ordered that the hall of his Academy of Music should be put at Melchior's disposal, and deigned to promise that he would have the young artist presented to himself on the day of the performance.

Melchior set about organizing the concert as quickly as possible. He engaged the support of the *Hof Musik Verein*, and as the success of his first ventures had blown out his sense of proportion, he undertook at the same time to publish a magnificent edition of the *Pleasures of Childhood*. He wanted to have printed on the cover of it a portrait of Jean-Christophe at the piano, with himself, Melchior, standing by his side, violin in hand. He had to abandon that, not on account of the cost—Melchior did not stop at any expense—but because there was not time enough. He fell back on an allegorical design representing a cradle, a trumpet, a drum, a wooden horse, grouped round a lyre which put forth rays like the sun. The title-page bore, together with a long dedication, in which the name of the Prince stood out in enormous letters, a notice to the effect that "Herr Jean-Christophe Krafft was six years old." He was, in fact, seven and a half. The printing of the design was very expensive. To meet the bill for it, Jean Michel had to sell an old eighteenth-century chest, carved with faces, which he had never consented to sell, in spite of the repeated offers of Wormser, the furniture-dealer. But Melchior had no doubt but the subscriptions would cover the cost, and beyond that the expenses of printing the composition.

One other question occupied his mind: how to dress Jean-Christophe on the day of the concert. There was a family council to decide the matter. Melchior would have liked the boy to appear in a short frock and bare legs, like a child of four. But Jean-Christophe was very large for his age, and everybody knew him. They could not hope to deceive any one. Melchior had a great idea. He decided that the boy should wear a dress-coat and white tie. In vain did Louisa protest that they would make her poor boy ridiculous. Melchior anticipated exactly the success and

merriment that would be produced by such an unexpected appearance. It was decided on, and the tailor came and measured Jean-Christophe for his little coat. He had also to have fine linen and patent-leather pumps, and all that swallowed up their last penny. Jean Christophe was very uncomfortable in his new clothes. To make him used to them they made him try on his various garments. For a whole month he hardly left the piano-stool. They taught him to bow. He had never a moment of liberty. He raged against it, but dared not rebel, for he thought that he was going to accomplish something startling. He was both proud and afraid of it. They pampered him; they were afraid he would catch cold; they swathed his neck in scarves; they warmed his boots in case they were wet; and at table he had the best of everything.

At last the great day arrived. The barber came to preside over his toilet and curl Jean-Christophe's rebellious hair. He did not leave it until he had made it look like a sheepskin. All the family walked round Jean-Christophe and declared that he was superb. Melchior, after looking him up and down, and turning him about and about, was seized with an idea, and went off to fetch a large flower, which he put in his buttonhole. But when Loiusa saw him she raised her hands, and cried out distressfully that he looked like a monkey. That hurt him cruelly. He did not know whether to be ashamed or proud of his garb. Instinctively he felt humiliated, and he was more so at the concert. Humiliation was to be for him the outstanding emotion of that memorable day.

The concert was about to begin. The hall was half empty; the Grand Duke had not arrived. One of those kindly and well-informed friends who always appear on these occasions came and told them that there was a Council being held at the Palace, and that the Grand Duke would not come. He had it on good authority. Melchior was in despair. He fidgeted, paced up and down, and looked repeatedly out of the window. Old Jean Michel was also in torment, but he was concerned for his grandson. He

bombarded him with instructions. Jean-Christophe was infected by the nervousness of his family. He was not in the least anxious about his compositions, but he was troubled by the thought of the bows that he had to make to the audience, and thinking of them brought him to agony.

However, he had to begin; the audience was growing impatient. The orchestra of the *Hof Musik Verein* began the *Coriolan Overture*. The boy knew neither Coriolan nor Beethoven, for though he had often heard Beethoven's music, he had not known it. He never bothered about the names of the works he heard. He gave them names of his own invention, while he created little stories or pictures for them. He classified them usually in three categories: fire, water, and earth, with a thousand degrees between each. Mozart belonged almost always to water. He was a meadow by the side of a river, a transparent mist floating over the water, a spring shower, or a rainbow. Beethoven was fire—now a furnace with gigantic flames and vast columns of smoke; now a burning forest, a heavy and terrible cloud, flashing lightning; now a wide sky full of quivering stars, one of which breaks free, swoops, and dies on a fine September night setting the heart beating. Now the imperious ardor of that heroic soul burned him like fire. Everything else disappeared. What was it all to him?—Melchior in despair, Jean Michel agitated, all the busy world, the audience, the Grand Duke, little Jean-Christophe. What had he to do with all these? What lay between them and him? Was that he—he, himself? . . . He was given up to the furious will that carried him headlong. He followed it breathlessly, with tears in his eyes, and his legs numb, thrilling from the palms of his hands to the soles of his feet. His blood drummed "Charge!" and he trembled in every limb. And as he listened so intensely, hiding behind a curtain, his heart suddenly leaped violently. The orchestra had stopped short in the middle of a bar, and after a moment's silence, it broke into a crashing of brass and cymbals with a military march, officially strident. The transition from one sort of music to another was so brutal, so unexpected, that Jean-Christophe ground his teeth and

stamped his foot with rage, and shook his fist at the wall. But Melchior rejoiced. The Grand Duke had come in, and the orchestra was saluting him with the National Anthem. And in a trembling voice Jean Michel gave his last instructions to his grandson.

The overture began again, and this time was finished. It was now Jean-Christophe's turn. Melchior had arranged the programme to show off at the same time the skill of both father and son. They were to play together a sonata of Mozart for violin and piano. For the sake of effect he had decided that Jean-Christophe should enter alone. He was led to the entrance of the stage and showed the piano at the front, and for the last time it was explained what he had to do, and then he was pushed on from the wings.

He was not much afraid, for he was used to the theater; but when he found himself alone on the platform, with hundreds of eyes staring at him, he became suddenly so frightened that instinctively he moved backwards and turned towards the wings to go back again. He saw his father there gesticulating and with his eyes blazing. He had to go on. Besides, the audience had seen him. As he advanced there arose a twittering of curiosity, followed soon by laughter, which grew louder and louder. Melchior had not been wrong, and the boy's garb had all the effect anticipated. The audience rocked with laughter at the sight of the child with his long hair and gipsy complexion timidly trotting across the platform in the evening dress of a man of the world. They got up to see him better. Soon the hilarity was general. There was nothing unkindly in it, but it would have made the most hardened musician lose his head. Jean-Christophe, terrified by the noise, and the eyes watching, and the glasses turned upon him, had only one idea: to reach the piano as quickly as possible, for it seemed to him a refuge, an island in the midst of the sea. With head down, looking neither to right nor left, he ran quickly across the platform, and when he reached the middle of it, instead of bowing to the audience, as had been arranged, he turned his back on it, and plunged straight for the piano. The chair was too high for him to sit down without his father's help, and in

his distress, instead of waiting, he climbed up on to it on his knees. That increased the merriment of the audience, but now Jean-Christophe was safe. Sitting at his instrument, he was afraid of no one.

Melchior came at last. He gained by the good-humor of the audience, who welcomed him with warm applause. The sonata began. The boy played it with imperturbable certainty, with his lips pressed tight in concentration, his eyes fixed on the keys, his little legs hanging down from the chair. He became more at ease as the notes rolled out; he was among friends that he knew. A murmur of approbation reached him, and waves of pride and satisfaction surged through him as he thought that all these people were silent to listen to him and to admire him. But hardly had he finished when fear overcame him again, and the applause which greeted him gave him more shame than pleasure. His shame increased when Melchior took him by the hand, and advanced with him to the edge of the platform, and made him bow to the public. He obeyed, and bowed very low, with a funny awkwardness; but he was humiliated, and blushed for what he had done, as though it were a thing ridiculous and ugly.

He had to sit at the piano again, and he played the *Pleasures of Childhood*. Then the audience was enraptured. After each piece they shouted enthusiastically. They wanted him to begin again, and he was proud of his success and at the same time almost hurt by such applause, which was also a command. At the end the whole audience rose to acclaim him; the Grand Duke led the applause. But as Jean-Christophe was now alone on the platform he dared not budge from his seat. The applause redoubled. He bent his head lower and lower, blushing and hang-dog in expression, and he looked steadily away from the audience. Melchior came. He took him in his arms, and told him to blow kisses. He pointed out to him the Grand Duke's box. Jean-Christophe turned a deaf ear. Melchior took his arm, and threatened him in a low voice. Then he did as he was told passively, but he did not look at anybody, he did not raise his eyes, but went on turning his head away, and he was unhappy.

He was suffering; how, he did not know. His vanity was suffering. He did not like the people who were there at all. It was no use their applauding; he could not forgive them for having laughed and for being amused by his humiliation; he could not forgive them for having seen him in such a ridiculous position—held in mid-air to blow kisses. He disliked them even for applauding, and when Melchior did at last put him down, he ran away to the wings. A lady threw a bunch of violets up at him as he went. It brushed his face. He was panic-stricken and ran as fast as he could, turning over a chair that was in his way. The faster he ran the more they laughed, and the more they laughed the faster he ran.

At last he reached the exit, which was filled with people looking at him. He forced his way through, butting, and ran and hid himself at the back of the anteroom. His grandfather was in high feather, and covered him with blessings. The musicians of the orchestra shouted with laughter, and congratulated the boy, who refused to look at them or to shake hands with them. Melchior listened intently, gaging the applause, which had not yet ceased, and wanted to take Jean-Christophe on to the stage again. But the boy refused angrily, clung to his grandfather's coat-tails, and kicked at everybody who came near him. At last he burst into tears, and they had to let him be.

Just at this moment an officer came to say that the Grand Duke wished the artists to go to his box. How could the child be presented in such a state? Melchior swore angrily, and his wrath only had the effect of making Jean-Christophe's tears flow faster. To stop them, his grandfather promised him a pound of chocolates if he would not cry any more, and Jean-Christophe, who was greedy, stopped dead, swallowed down his tears, and let them carry him off; but they had to swear at first most solemnly that they would not take him on to the platform again.

In the anteroom of the Grand Ducal box he was presented to a gentleman in a dress-coat, with a face like a pug-dog, bristling mustaches, and a short, pointed beard—a little red-faced man, inclined to stoutness, who addressed

him with bantering familiarity, and called him "Mozart *redivivus!*" This was the Grand Duke. Then he was presented in turn to the Grand Duchess and her daughter, and their suite. But as he did not dare raise his eyes, the only thing he could remember of this brilliant company was a series of gowns and uniforms from the waist down to the feet. He sat on the lap of the young Princess, and dared not to move or breathe. She asked him questions, which Melchior answered in an obsequious voice with formal replies, respectful and servile; but she did not listen to Melchior, and went on teasing the child. He grew redder and redder, and, thinking that everybody must have noticed it, he thought he must explain it away and said with a long sigh:

"My face is red. I am hot."

That made the girl shout with laughter. But Jean-Christophe did not mind it in her, as he had in his audience just before, for her laughter was pleasant, and she kissed him, and he did not dislike that.

Then he saw his grandfather in the passage at the door of the box, beaming and bashful. The old man was fain to show himself, and also to say a few words, but he dared not, because no one had spoken to him. He was enjoying his grandson's glory at a distance. Jean-Christophe became tender, and felt an irresistible impulse to procure justice also for the old man, so that they should know his worth. His tongue was loosed, and he reached up to the ear of his new friend and whispered to her:

"I will tell you a secret."

She laughed, and said:

"What?"

"You know," he went on—"you know the pretty *trio* in my *minuetto*, the *minuetto* I played? . . . You know it? . . ." (He hummed it gently.) ". . . Well, grandfather wrote it, not I. All the other airs are mine. But that is the best. Grandfather wrote it. Grandfather did not want me to say anything. You won't tell anybody? . . ." (He pointed out the old man.) "That is my grandfather. I love him; he is very kind to me."

At that the young Princess laughed again, said that he was a darling, covered him with kisses, and, to the consternation of Jean-Christophe and his grandfather, told everybody. Everybody laughed then, and the Grand Duke congratulated the old man, who was covered with confusion, tried in vain to explain himself, and stammered like a guilty criminal. But Jean-Christophe said not another word to the girl, and in spite of her wheedling he remained dumb and stiff. He despised her for having broken her promise. His idea of princes suffered considerably from this disloyalty. He was so angry about it that he did not hear anything that was said, or that the Prince had appointed him laughingly his pianist in ordinary, his *Hof Musicus*.

He went out with his relatives, and found himself surrounded in the corridors of the theater, and even in the street, with people congratulating him or kissing him. That displeased him greatly, for he did not like being kissed, and did not like people meddling with him without asking his permission.

At last they reached home, and then hardly was the door closed than Melchior began to call him a "little idiot" because he had said that the *trio* was not his own. As the boy was under the impression that he had done a fine thing, which deserved praise, and not blame, he rebelled, and was impertinent. Melchior lost his temper, and said that he would box his ears, although he had played his music well enough, because with his idiocy he had spoiled the whole effect of the concert. Jean-Christophe had a profound sense of justice. He went and sulked in a corner; he visited his contempt upon his father, the Princess, and the whole world. He was hurt also because the neighbors came and congratulated his parents and laughed with them, as if it were they who had played, and as if it were their affair.

At this moment a servant of the Court came with a beautiful gold watch from the Grand Duke and a box of lovely sweets from the young Princess. Both presents gave great pleasure to Jean-Christophe, and he did not know which gave him the more; but he was in such a bad temper that

he would not admit it to himself, and he went on sulking, scowling at the sweets, and wondering whether he could properly accept a gift from a person who had betrayed his confidence. As he was on the point of giving in his father wanted to set him down at once at the table, and make him write at his dictation a letter of thanks. This was too much. Either from the nervous strain of the day, or from instinctive shame at beginning the letter as Melchior wanted him to, with the words, "The little servant and musician—*Knecht und Musicus*—of Your Highness . . ." he burst into tears, and was inconsolable. The servant waited and scoffed. Melchior had to write the letter. That did not make him exactly kindly disposed towards Jean-Christophe. As a crowning misfortune, the boy let his watch fall and broke it. A storm of reproaches broke upon him. Melchior shouted that he would have to go without dessert. Jean-Christophe said angrily that that was what he wanted. To punish him, Louisa said that she would begin by confiscating his sweets. Jean-Christophe was up in arms at that, and said that the box was his, and no one else's, and that no one should take it away from him! He was smacked, and in a fit of anger snatched the box from his mother's hands, hurled it on the floor, and stamped on it. He was whipped, taken to his room, undressed, and put to bed.

In the evening he heard his parents dining with friends—a magnificent repast, prepared a week before in honor of the concert. He was like to die with wrath at such injustice. They laughed loudly, and touched glasses. They had told the guests that the boy was tired, and no one bothered about him. Only after dinner, when the party was breaking up, he heard a slow, shuffling step come into his room, and old Jean Michel bent over his bed and kissed him, and said: "Dear little Jean-Christophe! . . ." Then, as if he were ashamed, he went away without another word. He had slipped into his hand some sweetmeats which he had hidden in his pocket.

That softened Jean-Christophe; but he was so tired with all the day's emotions that he had not the strength to think about what his grandfather had done. He had not even the

strength to reach out to the good things the old man had given him. He was worn out, and went to sleep almost at once.

His sleep was light. He had acute nervous attacks, like electric shocks, which shook his whole body. In his dreams he was haunted by wild music. He awoke in the night. The Beethoven overture that he had heard at the concert was roaring in his ears. It filled the room with its mighty beat. He sat up in his bed, rubbed his eyes and ears, and asked himself if he were asleep. No; he was not asleep. He recognized the sound, he recognized those roars of anger, those savage cries; he heard the throbbing of that passionate heart leaping in his bosom, that tumult of the blood; he felt on his face the frantic beating of the wind, lashing and destroying, then stopping suddenly, cut off by an Herculean will. That Titanic soul entered his body, blew out his limbs and his soul, and seemed to give them colossal proportions. He strode over all the world. He was like a mountain, and storms raged within him—storms of wrath, storms of sorrow! . . . Ah, what sorrow! . . . But they were nothing! He felt so strong! . . . To suffer—still to suffer! . . . Ah, how good it is to be strong! How good it is to suffer when a man is strong! . . .

He laughed. His laughter rang out in the silence of the night. His father woke up and cried:

“Who is there?”

His mother whispered:

“Ssh! the boy is dreaming!”

All then were silent; round them all was silence. The music died away, and nothing sounded but the regular breathing of the human creatures asleep in the room, comrades in misery thrown together by Fate in the same frail barque, bound onwards by a wild whirling force through the night.

(Jean-Christophe's letter to the Grand Duke Leopold is inspired by Beethoven's letter to the Prince Elector of Bonn, written when he was eleven.)

MORNING

I THE DEATH OF JEAN MICHEL

Years have passed. Jean-Christophe is nearly eleven. His musical education is proceeding. He has learned to play every instrument a little. He is already quite skilful with the violin, and his father procured him a seat in the orchestra. He acquitted himself so well there that after a few months' probation he was officially appointed second violin in the *Hof Musik Verein*. He has begun to earn his living. Not too soon either, for affairs at home have gone from bad to worse. Melchior's intemperance has swamped him, and his grandfather is growing old.

Jean-Christophe has taken in the melancholy situation. He is already as grave and anxious as a man. He fulfils his task valiantly, though it does not interest him, and he is apt to fall asleep in the orchestra in the evenings, because it is late and he is tired.

The Grand Duke did not forget his pianist in ordinary. Not that the small pension which was granted to him with this title was regularly paid—it had to be asked for—but from time to time Jean-Christophe used to receive orders to go to the Palace when there were distinguished guests, or simply when Their Highnesses took it into their heads that they wanted to hear him. It was almost always in the evening, at the time when Jean-Christophe wanted to be alone. He had to leave everything and hurry off. Sometimes he was made to wait in the anteroom, because dinner was not finished. The servants, accustomed to see him, used to address him familiarly. Then he would be led into a great room full of mirrors and lights, in which well-fed men and women

used to stare at him with horrid curiosity. He had to cross the waxed floor to kiss Their Highnesses' hands, and the more he grew the more awkward he became, for he felt that he was in a ridiculous position, and his pride used to suffer.

When it was all done he used to sit at the piano and have to play for these idiots. He thought them idiots. There were moments when their indifference so oppressed him as he played that he was often on the point of stopping in the middle of a piece. There was no air about him; he was near suffocation, seemed losing his senses. When he finished he was overwhelmed with congratulations and laden with compliments; he was introduced all round. He thought they looked at him like some strange animal in the Prince's menagerie, and that the words of praise were addressed rather to his master than to himself. He thought himself brought low, and he developed a morbid sensibility from which he suffered the more as he dared not show it. He saw offense in the most simple actions. If any one laughed in a corner of the room, he imagined himself to be the cause of it, and he knew not whether it were his manners, or his clothes, or his person, or his hands, or his feet, that caused the laughter. He was humiliated by everything. He was humiliated if people did not talk to him, humiliated if they did, humiliated if they gave him sweets like a child, humiliated especially when the Grand Duke, as sometimes happened, in princely fashion dismissed him by pressing a piece of money into his hand. He was wretched at being poor and at being treated as a poor boy. One evening, as he was going home, the money that he had received weighed so heavily upon him that he threw it through a cellar window, and then immediately he would have done anything to get it back, for at home there was a month's old account with the butcher to pay.

He found consolation in wandering with Uncle Gottfried when he was in the neighborhood. He became more and more friendly with him, and sympathized with his independent temper. He understood so well now Gottfried's delight in tramping the roads without a tie in the world! Often

they used to go out together in the evening into the country, straight on, aimlessly, and as Gottfried always forgot the time, they used to come back very late, and then were scolded. Gottfried knew that it was wrong, but Jean-Christophe used to implore, and he could not himself resist the pleasure of it. About midnight he would stand in front of the house and whistle, an agreed signal. Jean-Christophe would be in his bed fully dressed. He would slip out with his shoes in his hand, and, holding his breath, creep with all the artful skill of a savage to the kitchen window, which opened on to the road. He would climb on to the table; Gottfried would take him on his shoulders, and then off they would go, happy as truants.

Sometimes they would go and seek out Jeremy the fisherman, a friend of Gottfried's, and then they would slip out in his boat under the moon. The water dropping from the oars gave out little arpeggios, then chromatic scales. A milky vapor hung tremulous over the surface of the waters. The stars quivered. The cocks called to each other from either bank, and sometimes in the depths of the sky they heard the trilling of larks ascending from earth, deceived by the light of the moon. They were silent. Gottfried hummed a tune. Jeremy told strange tales of the lives of the beasts—tales that gained in mystery from the curt and enigmatic manner of their telling. The moon hid herself behind the woods. They skirted the black mass of the hills. The darkness of the water and the sky mingled. There was never a ripple on the water. Sounds died down. The boat glided through the night. Was she gliding? Was she moving? Was she still? . . . The reeds parted with a sound like the rustling of silk. The boat grounded noiselessly. They climbed out on to the bank, and returned on foot. They would not return until dawn. They followed the river-bank. Clouds of silver ablets, green as ears of corn, or blue as jewels, teemed in the first light of day. They swarmed like the serpents of Medusa's head, and flung themselves greedily at the bread thrown to them; they plunged for it as it sank, and turned in spirals, and then darted away in a flash, like a ray of light. The river took on rosy and purple hues of reflection.

The birds woke one after another. The truants hurried back. Just as carefully as when they had set out, they returned to the room, with its thick atmosphere, and Jean-Christophe, worn out, fell into bed, and slept at once, with his body sweet-smelling with the smell of the fields.

All was well, and nothing would have been known, but that one day Ernest, his younger brother, betrayed Jean-Christophe's midnight sallies. From that moment they were forbidden, and he was watched. But he contrived to escape, and he preferred the society of the little peddler and his friends to any other. His family was scandalized. Melchior said that he had the tastes of a laborer. Old Jean Michel was jealous of Jean-Christophe's affection for Gottfried, and used to lecture him about lowering himself so far as to like such vulgar company when he had the honor of mixing with the best people and of being the servant of princes. It was considered that Jean-Christophe was lacking in dignity and self-respect.

In spite of the penury which increased with Melchior's intemperance and folly, life was tolerable as long as Jean Michel was there. He was the only creature who had any influence over Melchior, and who could hold him back to a certain extent from his vice. The esteem in which he was generally held did serve to pass over the drunkard's freaks, and he used constantly to come to the aid of the household with money. Besides the modest pension which he enjoyed as retired *Kapellmeister*, he was still able to earn small sums by giving lessons and tuning pianos. He gave most of it to his daughter-in-law, for he perceived her difficulties, though she strove to hide them from him. Louisa hated the idea that he was denying himself for them, and it was all the more to the old man's credit in that he had always been accustomed to a large way of living and had great needs to satisfy. Sometimes even his ordinary sacrifices were not sufficient, and to meet some urgent debt Jean Michel would have secretly to sell a piece of furniture or books, or some relic that he set store by. Melchior knew that his father made presents to Louisa that were concealed from himself, and very often he would lay hands on them, in spite of pro-

test. But when this came to the old man's ears—not from Louisa, who said nothing of her troubles to him, but from one of his grandchildren—he would fly into a terrible passion, and there were frightful scenes between the two men. They were both extraordinarily violent, and they would come to round oaths and threats—almost it seemed as though they would come to blows. But even in his most angry passion respect would hold Melchior in check, and, however drunk he might be, in the end he would bow his head to the torrent of insults and humiliating reproach which his father poured out upon him. But for that he did not cease to watch for the first opportunity of breaking out again, and with his thoughts on the future, Jean Michel would be filled with melancholy and anxious fears.

"My poor children," he used to say to Louisa, "what will become of you when I am no longer here? . . . Fortunately," he would add, fondling Jean-Christophe, "I can go on until this fellow pulls you out of the mire." But he was out in his reckoning; he was at the end of his road.

One summer day, when it was very hot, and he had drunk copiously, and argued in the market-place, he went home and began to work quietly in his garden. He loved digging. Bareheaded under the sun, still irritated by his argument, he dug angrily. Jean-Christophe was sitting in the arbor with a book in his hand, but he was not reading. He was dreaming and listening to the cheeping of the crickets, and mechanically following his grandfather's movements. The old man's back was towards him; he was bending and plucking out weeds. Suddenly Jean-Christophe saw him rise, beat against the air with his arms, and fall heavily with his face to the ground. For a moment he wanted to laugh; then he saw that the old man did not stir. He called to him, ran to him, and shook him with all his strength. Fear seized him. He knelt, and with his two hands tried to raise the great head from the ground. It was so heavy and he trembled so that he could hardly move it. But when he saw the eyes turned up, white and bloody, he was frozen with horror and, with a shrill cry, let the head fall. He got up in terror, ran away and out of the place. He cried and wept. A man pass-

ing by stopped the boy. Jean-Christophe could not speak, but he pointed to the house. The man went in, and Jean-Christophe followed him. Others had heard his cries, and they came from the neighboring houses. Soon the garden was full of people. They trampled the flowers, and bent down over the old man. They cried aloud. Two or three men lifted him up. Jean-Christophe stayed by the gate, turned to the wall, and hid his face in his hands. He was afraid to look, but he could not help himself, and when they passed him he saw through his fingers the old man's huge body, limp and flabby. One arm dragged along the ground, the head, leaning against the knee of one of the men carrying the body, bobbed at every step, and the face was scarred, covered with mud, bleeding. The mouth was open and the eyes were fearful. He howled again, and took to flight. He ran as though something were after him, and never stopped until he reached home. He burst into the kitchen with frightful cries. Louisa was cleaning vegetables. He hurled himself at her, and hugged her desperately, imploring her help. His face was distorted with his sobs; he could hardly speak. But at the first word she understood. She went white, let the things fall from her hands, and without a word rushed from the house.

In the evening, when the other children, tired of doing every sort of mischief in the house, were beginning to feel wearied and hungry, Louisa rushed in again, took them by the hand, and led them to their grandfather's house. She walked very fast, and Ernest and Rodolphe tried to complain, as usual; but Louisa bade them be silent in such a tone of voice that they held their peace. An instinctive fear seized them, and when they entered the house they began to weep. It was not yet night. The last hours of the sunset cast strange lights over the inside of the house—on the door-handle, on the mirror, on the violin hung on the wall in the chief room, which was half in darkness. But in the old man's room a candle was alight, and the flickering flame, vying with the livid, dying day, made the heavy darkness of the room more oppressive. Melchior was sitting near the window, loudly weeping. The doctor, leaning over the bed,

hid from sight what was lying there. Jean-Christophe's heart beat so that it was like to break. Louisa made the children kneel at the foot of the bed. Jean-Christophe stole a glance. He expected something so terrifying after what he had seen in the afternoon that at the first glimpse he was almost comforted. His grandfather lay motionless, and seemed to be asleep. For a moment the child believed that the old man was better, and that all was at an end. But when he heard his heavy breathing; when, as he looked closer, he saw the swollen face, on which the wound that he had come by in the fall had made a broad scar; when he understood that here was a man at point of death, he began to tremble; and while he repeated Louisa's prayer for the restoration of his grandfather, in his heart he prayed that if the old man could not get well he might be already dead. He was terrified at the prospect of what was going to happen.

The old man had not been conscious since the moment of his fall. He only returned to consciousness for a moment, enough to learn his condition, and that was lamentable. The priest was there, and recited the last prayers over him. They raised the old man on his pillow. He opened his eyes slowly, and they seemed no longer to obey his will. He breathed noisily, and with unseeing eyes looked at the faces and the lights, and suddenly he opened his mouth. A nameless terror showed on his features.

"But then . . ." he gasped—"but I am going to die!"

The awful sound of his voice pierced Jean-Christophe's heart. Never, never was it to fade from his memory. The old man said no more. He moaned like a little child. Then he seemed to be comforted for a moment. He had once more a flicker of consciousness. His heavy eyes, the pupils of which seemed to move aimlessly, met those of the boy frozen in his fear. They lit up. The old man tried to smile and speak. Louisa took Jean-Christophe and led him to the bedside. Jean Michel moved his lips, and tried to caress his head with his hand, but then he fell back into his torpor. It was the end.

They sent the children into the next room, but they had too much to do to worry about them, and Jean-Christophe,

under the attraction of the horror of it, peeped through the half-open door at the tragic face on the pillow; the man strangled by the firm clutch that had him by the neck; the face which grew ever more hollow as he watched; the sinking of the creature into the void, which seemed to suck it down like a pump; and the horrible death-rattle, the mechanical breathing, like a bubble of air bursting on the surface of waters; the last efforts of the body, which strives to live when the soul is no longer. Then the head fell on one side of the pillow. All, all was silence.

A few moments later, in the midst of the sobs and prayers and the confusion caused by the death, Louisa saw the child, pale, wide-eyed, with gaping mouth, clutching convulsively at the handle of the door. She ran to him. He had a seizure in her arms. She carried him away. He lost consciousness. He woke up to find himself in his bed. He howled in terror, because he had been left alone for a moment, had another seizure, and fainted again. For the rest of the night and the next day he was in a fever. Finally, he grew calm, and on the next night fell into a deep sleep, which lasted until the middle of the following day. He felt that some one was walking in his room, that his mother was leaning over his bed and kissing him. He thought he heard the sweet distant sound of bells. But he would not stir; he was in a dream.

When he opened his eyes again his Uncle Gottfried was sitting at the foot of his bed. Jean-Christophe was worn out, and could remember nothing. Then his memory returned, and he began to weep. Gottfried got up and kissed him.

"Well, my boy—well?" he said gently.

"Oh, uncle, uncle!" sobbed the boy, clinging to him.

"Cry, then . . ." said Gottfried. "Cry!"

He also was weeping.

When he was a little comforted Jean-Christophe dried his eyes and looked at Gottfried. Gottfried understood that he wanted to ask something.

"No," he said, putting a finger to his lips, "you must not talk. It is good to cry, bad to talk."

The boy insisted.

"It is no good."

"Only one thing—only one! . . ."

"What?"

Jean-Christophe hesitated.

"Oh, uncle!" he asked, "where is he now?"

Gottfried answered:

"He is with the Lord, my boy."

But that was not what Jean-Christophe had asked.

"No; you do not understand. Where is he—he *himself*?"

(He meant the body.)

He went on in a trembling voice:

"Is *he* still in the house?"

"They buried the good man this morning," said Gottfried. "Did you not hear the bells?"

Jean-Christophe was comforted. Then, when he thought that he would never see his beloved grandfather again, he wept once more bitterly.

"Poor little beast!" said Gottfried, looking pityingly at the child.

Jean-Christophe expected Gottfried to console him, but Gottfried made no attempt to do so, knowing that it was useless.

"Uncle Gottfried," asked the boy, "are not you afraid of it, too?"

(Much did he wish that Gottfried should not have been afraid, and would tell him the secret of it!)

"'Ssh!" he said, in a troubled voice. . . .

"And how is one not to be afraid?" he said, after a moment. "But what can one do? It is so. One must put up with it."

Jean-Christophe shook his head in protest.

"One has to put up with it, my boy," said Gottfried. "*He* ordered it up yonder. One has to love what *He* has ordered."

"I hate Him!" said Jean-Christophe, angrily shaking his fist at the sky.

Gottfried fearfully bade him be silent. Jean-Christophe himself was afraid of what he had just said, and he began to pray with Gottfried. But blood boiled, and as he repeated

the words of servile humility and resignation there was in his inmost heart a feeling of passionate revolt and horror of the abominable thing and the monstrous Being who had been able to create it.

Jean-Christophe thought of death day and night. Memories of the last agony pursued him. He heard that horrible breathing; every night, whatever he might be doing, he saw his grandfather again. All Nature was changed; it seemed as though there were an icy vapor drawn over her. Round him, everywhere, whichever way he turned, he felt upon his face the fatal breathing of the blind, all-powerful Beast; he felt himself in the grip of that fearful destructive Form, and he felt that there was nothing to be done. But, far from crushing him, the thought of it set him aflame with hate and indignation. He was never resigned to it. He butted head down against the impossible; it mattered nothing that he broke his head, and was forced to realize that he was not the stronger. He never ceased to revolt against suffering. From that time on his life was an unceasing struggle against the savagery of a Fate which he could not admit.

II MELCHIOR

The very misery of his life afforded him relief from the obsession of his thoughts. The ruin of his family, which only Jean Michel had withheld, proceeded apace when he was removed. With him the Kraffts had lost their chief means of support, and misery entered the house.

Melchior increased it. Far from working more, he abandoned himself utterly to his vice when he was free of the only force that had held him in check. Almost every night he returned home drunk, and he never brought back his earnings. Besides, he had lost almost all his lessons. One day he had appeared at the house of one of his pupils in a state of complete intoxication, and, as a consequence of this scandal, all doors were closed to him. He was only tolerated in the orchestra out of regard for the memory of his father, but Louisa trembled lest he should be dismissed any

day after a scene. He had already been threatened with it on several evenings when he had turned up in his place about the end of the performance.

Twice or thrice he had forgotten altogether to put in an appearance. And of what was he not capable in those moments of stupid excitement when he was taken with the itch to do and say idiotic things! Had he not taken it into his head one evening to try and play his great violin concerto in the middle of an act of the *Valkyrie*? They were hard put to it to stop him. Sometimes, too, he would shout with laughter in the middle of a performance at the amusing pictures that were presented on the stage or whirling in his own brain. He was a joy to his colleagues, and they passed over many things because he was so funny. But such indulgence was worse than severity, and Jean-Christophe could have died for shame.

Melchior sold the things that he had inherited from his father. Jean-Christophe sadly saw the precious relics go—the books, the bed, the furniture, the portraits of musicians. He could say nothing. But one day, when Melchior had crashed into Jean Michel's old piano, he swore as he rubbed his knee, and said that there was no longer room to move about in his own house, and that he would rid the house of all such gimcrackery. Jean-Christophe cried aloud. It was true that the rooms were too full, since all Jean Michel's belongings were crowded into them, so as to be able to sell the house, that dear house in which Jean-Christophe had spent the happiest hours of his childhood. It was true also that the old piano was not worth much, that it was husky in tone, and that for a long time Jean-Christophe had not used it, since he played on the fine new piano due to the generosity of the Prince; but however old and useless it might be, it was Jean-Christophe's best friend. It had awakened the child to the boundless world of music; on its worn yellow keys he had discovered with his fingers the kingdom of sounds and its laws; it had been his grandfather's work (months had gone to repairing it for his grandson), and he was proud of it; it was in some sort a holy relic, and Jean-Christophe pro-

tested that his father had no right to sell it. Melchior bade him be silent. Jean-Christophe cried louder than ever that the piano was his, and that he forbade any one to touch it; but Melchior looked at him with an evil smile, and said nothing.

Next day Jean-Christophe had forgotten the affair. He came home tired, but in a fairly good temper. He was struck by the sly looks of his brothers. They pretended to be absorbed in their books, but they followed him with their eyes, and watched all his movements, and bent over their books again when he looked at them. He had no doubt that they had played some trick upon him, but he was used to that, and did not worry about it, but determined, when he had found it out, to give them a good thrashing, as he always did on such occasions. He scorned to look into the matter, and he began to talk to his father, who was sitting by the fire, and questioned him as to the doings of the day with an affectation of interest which suited him but ill; and while he talked he saw that Melchior was exchanging stealthy nods and winks with the two children. Something caught at his heart. He ran into his room. The place where the piano had stood was empty! He gave a cry of anguish. In the next room he heard the stifled laughter of his brothers. The blood rushed to his face. He rushed in to them, and cried:

“My piano!”

Melchior raised his head with an air of calm bewilderment which made the children roar with laughter. He could not contain himself when he saw Jean-Christophe's piteous look, and he turned aside to guffaw. Jean-Christophe no longer knew what he was doing. He hurled himself like a mad thing on his father. Melchior, lolling in his chair, had no time to protect himself. The boy seized him by the throat and cried:

“Thief! Thief!”

It was only for a moment. Melchior shook himself, and sent Jean-Christophe rolling down on to the tile floor, though in his fury he was clinging to him like grim death.

The boy's head crashed against the tiles. Jean-Christophe got upon his knees. He was livid, and he went on saying in a choking voice:

"Thief, thief! . . . You are robbing us—mother and me. . . . Thief! . . . You are selling my grandfather!"

Melchior rose to his feet, and held his fist above Jean-Christophe's head. The boy stared at him with hate in his eyes. He was trembling with rage. Melchior began to tremble, too. He sat down, and hid his face in his hands. The two children had run away screaming. Silence followed the uproar. Melchior groaned and mumbled. Jean-Christophe, against the wall, never ceased glaring at him with clenched teeth, and he trembled in every limb. Melchior began to blame himself.

"I am a thief! I rob my family! My children despise me! It were better if I were dead!"

When he had finished whining, Jean-Christophe did not budge, but asked him harshly:

"Where is the piano?"

"At Wormser's," said Melchior, not daring to look at him.

Jean-Christophe took a step forward, and said:

"The money!"

Melchior, crushed, took the money from his pocket and gave it to his son. Jean-Christophe turned toward the door. Melchior called him:

"Jean-Christophe!"

Jean-Christophe stopped. Melchior went on in a quavering voice:

"Dear Jean-Christophe . . . do not despise me!"

Jean-Christophe flung his arms round his neck and sobbed:

"No, father—dear father! I do not despise you! I am so unhappy!"

In the end Melchior more and more lost interest in his work as violinist, and his absence from the theater became so frequent that, in spite of Jean-Christophe's entreaties, they had to dismiss him. The boy was left to support his father, his brothers, and the whole household.

So at fourteen Jean-Christophe became the head of the family.

Fevered years! No respite, no release—nothing to create a diversion from such maddening toil; no games, no friends. How should he have them? In the afternoon, when other children played, young Jean-Christophe, with his brows knit in attention, was at his place in the orchestra in the dusty and ill-lighted theater; and in the evening, when other children were abed, he was still there, sitting in his chair, bowed with weariness.

No intimacy with his brothers. The younger, Ernest, was twelve. He was a little ragamuffin, vicious and impudent, who spent his days with other rascals like himself, and from their company had caught not only deplorable manners, but shameful habits which good Jean-Christophe, who had never so much as suspected their existence, was horrified to see one day. The other, Rodolphe, was to go into business. He was steady, quiet, but sly. He thought himself much superior to Jean-Christophe, and did not admit his authority in the house, although it seemed natural to him to eat the food that he provided. Neither of the brothers cared for music, and Rodolphe affected to despise it. Chafing against Jean-Christophe's authority and lectures—for he took himself very seriously as the head of the family—the two boys had tried to rebel; but Jean-Christophe, who had lusty fists and the consciousness of right, sent them packing. Still they did not for that cease to do with him as they liked. They abused his credulity, and laid traps for him, into which he invariably fell. They used to extort money from him with barefaced lies, and laughed at him behind his back. Jean-Christophe was always taken in. He had so much need of being loved that an affectionate word was enough to disarm his rancor. He would have forgiven them everything for a little love. But his confidence was cruelly shaken when he heard them laughing at his stupidity after a scene of hypocritical embracing which had moved him to tears, and they had taken advantage of it to rob him of a gold watch, a present from the Prince, which they coveted. He despised them, and yet went on letting himself be taken in from his

unconquerable tendency to trust and to love. He knew it. He raged against himself, and he used to thrash his brothers soundly when he discovered once more that they had tricked him. That did not keep him from swallowing almost immediately the fresh hook which it pleased them to bait for him.

A more bitter cause of suffering was in store for him. He learned from officious neighbors that his father was speaking ill of him. After having been proud of his son's successes, and having boasted of them everywhere, Melchior was weak and shameful enough to be jealous of them. He tried to decry them. It was stupid to weep; Jean-Christophe could only shrug his shoulders in contempt. It was no use being angry about it, for his father did not know what he was doing, and was embittered by his own downfall. The boy said nothing. He was afraid, if he said anything, of being too hard; but he was cut to the heart.

One night when his family were sleeping, and he was sitting by his desk, not thinking or moving, he was engulfed in his ideas, when a sound of footsteps resounded down the little silent street, and a knock on the door brought him from his stupor. There was a murmuring of thick voices. He remembered that his father had not come in, and he thought angrily that they were bringing him back drunk, as they had done a week or two before, when they had found him lying in the street. For Melchior had abandoned all restraint, and was more and more the victim of his vice, though his athletic health seemed not in the least to suffer from an excess and a recklessness which would have killed any other man. He ate enough for four, drank until he dropped, passed whole nights out of doors in icy rain, was knocked down and stunned in brawls, and would get up again next day, with his rowdy gaiety, wanting everybody about him to be gay too.

Louisa, hurrying up, rushed to open the door. Jean-Christophe, who had not budged, stopped his ears so as not to hear Melchior's vicious voice and the tittering comments of the neighbors. . . .

. . . Suddenly a strange terror seized him; for no reason

he began to tremble, with his face hidden in his hands. And on the instant a piercing cry made him raise his head. He rushed to the door. . . .

In the midst of a group of men talking in low voices, in the dark passage, lit only by the flickering light of a lantern, lying, just as his grandfather had done, on a stretcher, was a body dripping with water, motionless. Louisa was clinging to it and sobbing. They had just found Melchior drowned in the mill-race.

Jean-Christophe gave a cry. Everything else vanished; all his other sorrows were swept aside. He threw himself on his father's body by Louisa's side, and they wept together.

Seated by the bedside, watching Melchior's last sleep, on whose face was now a severe and solemn expression, he felt the dark peace of death enter into his soul. His childish passion was gone from him like a fit of fever; the icy breath of the grave had taken it all away. Alas! What misery! How small everything showed by the side of this reality, the only reality—death! Was it worth while to suffer so much, to desire so much, to be so much put about to come in the end to that! . . .

He watched his father's sleep, and he was filled with an infinite pity. He remembered the smallest of his acts of kindness and tenderness. For with all his faults Melchior was not bad; there was much good in him. He loved his family. He was honest. He had a little of the uncompromising probity of the Kraffts, which, in all questions of morality and honor, suffered no discussion, and never would admit the least of those small moral impurities which so many people in society regard not altogether as faults. He was brave, and whenever there was any danger faced it with a sort of enjoyment. If he was extravagant himself, he was so for others too; he could not bear anybody to be sad, and very gladly gave away all that belonged to him—and did not belong to him—to the poor devils he met by the wayside. All his qualities appeared to Jean-Christophe now, and he invented some of them, or exaggerated them. It seemed to him that he had misunderstood his father. He re-

proached himself with not having loved him enough. He saw him as broken by Life; he thought he heard that unhappy soul, drifting, too weak to struggle, crying out for the life so uselessly lost. He heard that lamentable entreaty that had so cut him to the heart one day:

"Jean-Christophe! Do not despise me!"

And he was overwhelmed by remorse. He threw himself on the bed, and kissed the dead face and wept. And as he had done that day, he said again:

"Dear father, I do not despise you. I love you. Forgive me!"

But that piteous entreaty was not appeased, and went on:

"Do not despise me! Do not despise me!" And suddenly Jean-Christophe saw himself lying in the place of the dead man; he heard the terrible words coming from his own lips; he felt weighing on his heart the despair of a useless life, irreparably lost. And he thought in terror: "Ah! everything, all the suffering, all the misery in the world, rather than come to that! . . ." How near he had been to it! Had he not all but yielded to the temptation to snap off his life himself, cowardly to escape his sorrow? As if all the sorrows, all betrayals, were not childish griefs beside the torture and the crime of self-betrayal, denial of faith, of self-contempt in death!

He saw that life was a battle without armistice, without mercy, in which he who wishes to be a man worthy of the name of a man must forever fight against whole armies of invisible enemies; against the murderous forces of Nature, uneasy desires, dark thoughts, treacherously leading him to degradation and destruction. He saw that he had been on the point of falling into the trap. He saw that happiness and love were only the friends of a moment to lead the heart to disarm and abdicate. And the little puritan of fifteen heard the voice of his God:

"Go, go, and never rest."

"But whither, Lord, shall I go? Whatsoever I do, whithersoever I go, is not the end always the same? Is not the end of all things in that?"

"Go on to Death, you who must die! Go and suffer, you

who must suffer! You do not live to be happy. You live to fulfil my Law. Suffer; die. But be what you must be—a Man.”

YOUTH

I A D A

The house was plunged in silence. Since Melchior's death everything seemed dead. Now that his loud voice was stilled, from morning to night nothing was heard but the wearisome murmuring of the river.

Christophe hurled himself into his work. He took a fiercely angry pleasure in self-castigation for having wished to be happy. To expressions of sympathy and kind words he made no reply, but was proud and stiff. Without a word he went about his daily task, and gave his lessons with icy politeness. His pupils who knew of his misfortune were shocked by his insensibility. But those who were older and had some experience of sorrow knew that this apparent coldness might, in a child, be used only to conceal suffering: and they pitied him. He was not grateful for their sympathy. Even music could bring him no comfort. He played without pleasure, and as a duty. It was as though he found a cruel joy in no longer taking pleasure in anything, or in persuading himself that he did not: in depriving himself of every reason for living, and yet going on.

His two brothers, terrified by the silence of the house of death, ran away from it as quickly as possible. Christophe was left alone with his mother in the house, which was too large for them; and the meagerness of their resources, and the payment of certain debts which had been discovered after his father's death, forced them, whatever pain it might

cost, to seek another more lowly and less expensive dwelling.

They found a little flat,—two or three rooms on the second floor of a house in the Market Street. It was a noisy district in the middle of the town, far from the river, far from the trees, far from the country and all the familiar places. But they had to consult reason, not sentiment, and Christophe found in it a fine opportunity for gratifying his bitter creed of self-mortification.

Christophe was growing a new skin. Christophe was growing a new soul. And seeing the worn out and rotten soul of his childhood falling away he never dreamed that he was taking on a new one, young and stronger. As through life we change our bodies, so also do we change our souls; and the metamorphosis does not always take place slowly over many days; there are times of crisis when the whole is suddenly renewed. The adult changes his soul. The old soul that is cast off dies. In those hours of anguish we think that all is at an end. And the whole thing begins again. A life dies. Another life has already come into being.

He rediscovered the world, as though he had never seen it. It was a new childhood. It was as though a magic word had been uttered. An "Open Sesame!"—Nature flamed with gladness. The sun boiled. The liquid sky ran like a clear river. The earth steamed and cried aloud in delight. The plants, the trees, the insects, all the innumerable creatures were like dazzling tongues of flame in the fire of life writhing upwards. Everything sang aloud in joy.

Bursting with energy Christophe had moments when he was consumed with a desire to destroy, to burn, to smash, to glut with actions blind and uncontrolled the force which choked him. These outbursts usually ended in a sharp reaction: he would weep, and fling himself down on the ground, and kiss the earth, and try to dig into it with his teeth and hands, to feed himself with it, to merge into it: he trembled then with fever and desire.

One evening he was walking in the outskirts of a wood. His eyes were swimming with the light, his head was whirling: he was in that state of exaltation when all creatures

and things were transfigured. To that was added the magic of the soft warm light of evening. Rays of purple and gold hovered in the trees. From the meadows seemed to come a phosphorescent glimmer. In a field near by a girl was making hay. In her blouse and short skirt, with her arms and neck bare, she was raking the hay and heaping it up. She had a short nose, wide cheeks, a round face, a handkerchief thrown over her hair. The setting sun touched with red her sunburned skin, which, like a piece of pottery, seemed to absorb the last beams of the day.

She fascinated Christophe. Leaning against a beech-tree he watched her come towards the verge of the woods, eagerly, passionately. Everything else had disappeared. She took no notice of him. For a moment she looked at him cautiously: he saw her eyes blue and hard in her brown face. She passed so near to him that, when she leaned down to gather up the hay, through her open blouse he saw a soft down on her shoulders and back. Suddenly the vague desire which was in him leaped forth. He hurled himself at her from behind, seized her neck and waist, threw back her head and fastened his lips upon hers. He kissed her dry, cracked lips until he came against her teeth that bit him angrily. His hands ran over her rough arms, over her blouse, wet with her sweat. She struggled. He held her tighter, he wished to strangle her. She broke loose, cried out, spat, wiped her lips with her hand, and hurled insults at him. He let her go and fled across the fields. She threw stones at him and went on discharging after him a litany of filthy epithets. He blushed, less for anything that she might say or think, but for what he was thinking himself. The sudden unconscious act filled him with terror. What had he done? What should he do? What he was able to understand of it all only filled him with disgust. And he was tempted by his disgust. He fought against himself and knew not on which side was the real Christophe. A blind force beset him: in vain did he fly from it: it was only to fly from himself. What would she do about him? What should he do to-morrow . . . in an hour . . . the time it took to cross the plowed field to reach the road? . . . Would he ever reach it? Should he not stop,

and go back, and run back to the girl? And then? . . . He remembered that delirious moment when he had held her by the throat. Everything was possible. All things were worth while. A crime even. . . . Yes, even a crime. . . . The turmoil in his heart made him breathless. When he reached the road he stopped to breathe. Over there the girl was talking to another girl who had been attracted by her cries: and with arms akimbo, they were looking at each other and shouting with laughter.

After the wet summer the autumn was radiant. In the orchards the trees were weighed down with fruit. The red apples shone like billiard balls. Already some of the trees were taking on their brilliant garb of the falling year: flame color, fruit color, color of ripe melon, of oranges and lemons, of good cooking, and fried dishes. Misty lights glowed through the woods: and from the meadows there rose the little pink flames of the saffron.

He was going down a hill. It was a Sunday afternoon. He was striding, almost running, gaining speed down the slope. He was singing a phrase, the rhythm of which had been obsessing him all through his walk. He was red, disheveled: he was walking, swinging his arms, and rolling his eyes like a madman, when as he turned a bend in the road he came suddenly on a fair girl perched on a wall tugging with all her might at a branch of a tree from which she was greedily plucking and eating purple plums. Their astonishment was mutual. She looked at him, stared, with her mouth full. Then she burst out laughing. So did he. She was good to see, with her round face framed in fair curly hair, which was like a sunlit cloud about her, her full pink cheeks, her wide blue eyes, her rather large nose, impertinently turned up, her little red mouth showing white teeth—the canine little, strong, and projecting—her plump chin, and her full figure, large and plump, well built, solidly put together. He called out:

“Good eating!” And was for going on his road. But she called to him:

"Sir! Sir! Will you be very nice? Help me to get down. I can't . . ."

He returned and asked her how she had climbed up.

"With my hands and feet. . . . It is easy enough to get up. . . ."

"Especially when there are tempting plums hanging above your head. . . ."

"Yes. . . . But when you have eaten your courage goes. You can't find the way to get down."

He looked at her on her perch. He said:

"You are all right there. Stay there quietly. I'll come and see you to-morrow. Good-night!"

But he did not budge, and stood beneath her. She pretended to be afraid, and begged him with little glances not to leave her. They stayed looking at each other and laughing. She showed him the branch to which she was clinging and asked:

"Would you like some?"

Respect for property had not developed in Christophe: he accepted without hesitation. She amused herself with pelting him with plums. When he had eaten she said:

"Now! . . ."

He took a wicked pleasure in keeping her waiting. She grew impatient on her wall. At last he said:

"Come, then!" and held his hand up to her.

But just as she was about to jump down she thought a moment.

"Wait! We must make provision first!"

She gathered the finest plums within reach and filled the front of her blouse with them.

"Carefully! Don't crush them!"

He felt almost inclined to do so.

She lowered herself from the wall and jumped into his arms. Although he was sturdy he bent under her weight and all but dragged her down. They were of the same height. Their faces came together. He kissed her lips, moist and sweet with the juice of the plums: and she returned his kiss without more ceremony.

"Where are you going?" he asked.

"I don't know."

"Are you out alone?"

"No. I am with friends. But I have lost them. . . . Hi! Hi!" she called suddenly as loudly as she could.

No answer.

She did not bother about it any more. They began to walk, at random, following their noses.

"And you . . . where are you going?" said she.

"I don't know, either."

"Good. We'll go together."

She took some plums from her gaping blouse and began to munch them.

"You'll make yourself sick," he said.

"Not I! I've been eating them all day."

Through the gap in her blouse he saw the white of her chemise.

"They are all warm now," she said.

"Let me see!"

She held him one and laughed. He ate it. She watched him out of the corner of her eye as she sucked at the fruit like a child. He did not know how the adventure would end. It is probable that she at least had some suspicion. She waited.

"Hi! Hi!" Voices in the woods.

"Hi! Hi!" she answered. "Ah! There they are!" she said to Christophe. "Not a bad thing, either!"

But on the contrary she was thinking that it was rather a pity. But speech was not given to woman for her to say what she is thinking. . . . Thank God! for there would be an end of morality on earth. . . .

The voices came near. Her friends were near the road. She leaped the ditch, climbed the hedge, and hid behind the trees. He watched her in amazement. She signed to him imperiously to come to her. He followed her. She plunged into the depths of the wood.

"Hi! Hi!" she called once more when they had gone some distance. "You see, they must look for me!" she explained to Christophe.

Her friends had stopped on the road and were listening for her voice to mark where it came from. They answered her and in their turn entered the woods. But she did not wait for them. She turned about on right and on left. They bawled loudly after her. She let them, and then went and called in the opposite direction. At last they wearied of it, and, making sure that the best way of making her come was to give up seeking her, they called:

"Good-by!" and went off singing.

She was furious that they should not have bothered about her any more than that. She had tried to be rid of them: but she had not counted on their going off so easily. Christophe looked rather foolish: this game of hide-and-seek with a girl whom he did not know did not exactly enthrall him: and he had no thought of taking advantage of their solitude. Nor did she think of it: in her annoyance she forgot Christophe.

"Oh! It's too much," she said, thumping her hands together. "They have left me."

"But," said Christophe, "you wanted them to."

"Not at all."

"You ran away."

"If I ran away from them that is my affair, not theirs. They ought to look for me. What if I were lost? . . ."

Already she was beginning to be sorry for herself because of what might have happened if . . . if the opposite of what actually had occurred had come about.

"Oh!" she said. "I'll shake them!" She turned back and strode off.

As she went she remembered Christophe and looked at him once more.—But it was too late. She began to laugh. The little demon which had been in her the moment before was gone. While she was waiting for another to come she saw Christophe with the eyes of indifference. And then, she was hungry. Her stomach was reminding her that it was suppertime: she was in a hurry to rejoin her friends at the inn. She took Christophe's arm, leaned on it with all her weight, groaned, and said that she was exhausted. That did not keep her from dragging Christophe down a slope, run-

ning, and shouting, and laughing like a mad thing.

They talked. She learned who he was: she did not know his name, and seemed not to be greatly impressed by his title of musician. He learned that she was a shop-girl from a dressmaker's in the *Kaiserstrasse* (the most fashionable street in the town): her name was Adelheid—to friends, Ada. Her companions on the excursion were one of her friends, who worked at the same place as herself, and two nice young men, a clerk at Weiller's bank, and a clerk from a big linen-draper's. They were turning their Sunday to account: they had decided to dine at the Brochet inn, from which there is a fine view over the Rhine, and then to return by boat.

The others had already established themselves at the inn when they arrived. Ada made a scene with her friends: she complained of their cowardly desertion and presented Christophe as her savior. They did not listen to her complaints: but they knew Christophe, the bank-clerk by reputation, the clerk from having heard some of his compositions—he thought it a good idea to hum an air from one of them immediately afterwards—and the respect which they showed him made an impression on Ada, the more so as Myrrha, the other young woman—(her real name was Hansi or Johanna)—a brunette with blinking eyes, bumpy forehead, hair screwed back, Chinese face, a little too animated, but clever and not without charm, in spite of her goat-like head and her oily golden-yellow complexion,—at once began to make advances to their *Hof Musicus*. They begged him to be so good as to honor their repast with his presence.

Never had he been in such high feather: for he was overwhelmed with attentions, and the two women, like good friends as they were, tried each to rob the other of him. Both courted him: Myrrha with ceremonious manners, sly looks, as she rubbed her leg against his under the table—Ada, openly making play with her fine eyes, her pretty mouth, and all the seductive resources at her command. Such coquetry in its almost coarseness incommoded and distressed Christophe.

Myrrha interested him, he guessed her to be more intelligent than Ada: but her obsequious manners and her ambiguous smile were curiously attractive and repulsive to him at the same time. She could do nothing against Ada's radiance of life and pleasure: and she was aware of it. When she saw that she had lost the bout, she abandoned the effort, turned in upon herself, went on smiling, and patiently waited for her day to come. Ada, seeing herself mistress of the field, did not seek to push forward the advantage she had gained: what she had done had been mainly to despise her friend: she had succeeded, she was satisfied. But she had been caught in her own game. She felt as she looked into Christophe's eyes the passion that she had kindled in him: and that same passion began to awake in her. She was silent: she left her vulgar teasing: they looked at each other in silence: on their lips they had the savor of their kiss. From time to time by fits and starts they joined vociferously in the jokes of the others: then they relapsed into silence, stealing glances at each other. At last they did not even look at each other, as though they were afraid of betraying themselves. Absorbed in themselves they brooded over their desire.

When the meal was over they got ready to go. They had to go a mile and a half through the woods to reach the pier. Ada got up first: Christophe followed her. They waited on the steps until the others were ready: without speaking, side by side, in the thick mist that was hardly at all lit up by the single lamp hanging by the inn door.—Myrrha was dawdling by the mirror.

Ada took Christophe's hand and led him along the house towards the garden into the darkness. Under a balcony from which hung a curtain of vines they hid. All about them was dense darkness. They could not even see each other. The wind stirred the tops of the pines. He felt Ada's warm fingers entwined in his and the sweet scent of a heliotrope flower that she had at her breast.

Suddenly she dragged him to her: Christophe's lips found Ada's hair, wet with the mist, and kissed her eyes, her eyebrows, her nose, her cheeks, the corners of her mouth,

seeking her lips, and finding them, staying pressed to them.

The others had gone. They called:

"Ada! . . ."

They did not stir, they hardly breathed, pressed close to each other, lips and bodies.

They heard Myrrha:

"They have gone on."

The footsteps of their companions died away in the night. They held each other closer, in silence, stifling on their lips a passionate murmuring.

In the distance a village clock rang out. They broke apart. They had to run to the pier. Without a word they set out, arms and hands entwined, keeping step—a little quick, firm step, like hers. The road was deserted: no creature was abroad: they could not see ten yards ahead of them: they went, serene and sure, into the beloved night. They never stumbled over the pebbles on the road. As they were late they took a short cut. The path led for some way down through vines and then began to ascend and wind up the side of the hill. Through the mist they could hear the roar of the river and the heavy paddles of the steamer approaching. They left the road and ran across the fields. At last they found themselves on the bank of the Rhine but still far from the pier. Their serenity was not disturbed. Ada had forgotten her fatigue of the evening. It seemed to them that they could have walked all night like that, on the silent grass, in the hovering mists, that grew wetter and more dense along the river that was wrapped in a whiteness as of the moon. The steamer's siren hooted: the invisible monster plunged heavily away and away. They said, laughing:

"We will take the next."

By the edge of the river soft lapping waves broke at their feet. At the landing stage they were told:

"The last boat has just gone."

Christophe's heart thumped. Ada's hand grasped his arm more tightly.

"But," she said, "there will be another one to-morrow."

A few yards away in a halo of mist was the flickering light of a lamp hung on a post on a terrace by the river. A

little farther on were a few lighted windows—a little inn.

They went into the tiny garden. The sand ground under their feet. They groped their way to the steps. When they entered, the lights were being put out. Ada, on Christophe's arm, asked for a room. The room to which they were led opened on to the little garden. Christophe leaned out of the window and saw the phosphorescent flow of the river, and the shade of the lamp on the glass of which were crushed mosquitoes with large wings. The door was closed. Ada was standing by the bed and smiling. He dared not look at her. She did not look at him: but through her lashes she followed Christophe's every movement. The floor creaked with every step. They could hear the least noise in the house. They sat on the bed and embraced in silence.

The puffing of the steamer outside the window brought Christophe from his torpor. They had agreed to leave at seven so as to return to the town in time for their usual occupations. He whispered:

"Do you hear?"

She did not open her eyes; she smiled, she put out her lips, she tried to kiss him and then let her head fall back on his shoulder. . . . Through the window panes he saw the funnel of the steamer slip by against the sky, he saw the empty deck, and clouds of smoke. Once more he slipped into dreaminess. . . .

An hour passed without his knowing it. He heard it strike and started in astonishment.

"Ada! . . ." he whispered to the girl. "Ada!" he said again. "It's eight o'clock."

Her eyes were still closed: she frowned and pouted pettishly.

"Oh! let me sleep!" she said.

She sighed wearily and turned her back on him and went to sleep once more.

He began to dream. His blood ran bravely, calmly through him. His limpid senses received the smallest impressions simply and freshly. He rejoiced in his strength and youth. Unwittingly he was proud of being a man. He smiled

in his happiness, and felt himself alone: alone as he had always been, more lonely even but without sadness, in a divine solitude. No more fever. No more shadows. Nature could freely cast her reflection upon his soul in its serenity. Lying on his back, facing the window, his eyes gazing deep into the dazzling air with its luminous mists, he smiled:

"How good it is to live! . . ."

That one, sleeping by his side. How came she there? How did they come to this room? He looks at her, he does not know her: she is a stranger to him: yesterday morning she did not exist for him. What does he know of her?—He knows that she is not clever. He knows that she is not good. He knows that she is not even beautiful with her face spiritless and bloated with sleep, her low forehead, her mouth open in breathing, her swollen dried lips pouting like a fish. He knows that he does not love her.

And while he leaned over the innocent sleeper and scanned her face, and looked at her with eyes of unkindness, she felt his eyes upon her. Uneasy under his scrutiny she made a great effort to raise her heavy lids and to smile: and she said, stammering a little like a waking child:

"Don't look at me. I'm ugly. . . ."

She fell back at once, weighed down with sleep, smiled once more, murmured.

"Oh! I'm so . . . so sleepy! . . ." and went off again into her dreams.

He could not help laughing: he kissed her childish lips more tenderly. He watched the girl sleeping for a moment longer, and got up quietly. She gave a comfortable sigh when he was gone. He tried not to wake her as he dressed, though there was no danger of that: and when he had done he sat in the chair near the window and watched the steaming smoking river which looked as though it were covered with ice: and he fell into a brown study in which there hovered music, pastoral, melancholy.

From time to time she half opened her eyes and looked at him vaguely, took a second or two, smiled at him, and passed from one sleep to another. She asked him the time.

"A quarter to nine."

Half asleep she pondered:

"What! Can it be a quarter to nine?"

At half-past nine she stretched, sighed, and said that she was going to get up.

It was ten o'clock before she stirred. She was petulant.

"Striking again! . . . The clock is fast! . . ." He laughed and went and sat on the bed by her side. She put her arms round his neck and told him her dreams. He did not listen very attentively and interrupted her with little love words. But she made him be silent and went on very seriously, as though she were telling something of the highest importance:

"She was at dinner: the Grand Duke was there: Myrrha was a Newfoundland dog. . . . No, a frizzy sheep who waited at table. . . . Ada had discovered a method of rising from the earth, of walking, dancing, and lying down in the air. You see it was quite simple: you had only to do . . . thus . . . thus . . . and it was done. . . ."

Christophe laughed at her. She laughed too, though a little ruffled at his laughing. She shrugged her shoulders.

"Ah! you don't understand! . . ."

They breakfasted on the bed from the same cup, with the same spoon.

At last she got up: she threw off the bedclothes and slipped down from the bed. Then she sat down to recover her breath and looked at her feet. Finally she clapped her hands and told him to go out: and as he was in no hurry about it she took him by the shoulders and thrust him out of the door and then locked it.

After she had dawdled, looked over and stretched each of her handsome limbs, she sang, as she washed, a sentimental *Lied* in fourteen couplets, threw water at Christophe's face—he was outside drumming on the window—and as they left she plucked the last rose in the garden and then they took the steamer. The mist was not yet gone: but the sun shone through it: they floated through a creamy light. Ada sat at the stern with Christophe: she was sleepy and a little

sulky: she grumbled about the light in her eyes, and said that she would have a headache all day. And as Christophe did not take her complaints seriously enough she returned into morose silence. Her eyes were hardly opened and in them was the funny gravity of children who have just woke up. But at the next landing-stage an elegant lady came and sat not far from her, and she grew lively at once: she talked eagerly to Christophe about things sentimental and distinguished. She had resumed with him the ceremonious *Sie*.

Christophe was thinking about what she could say to her employer by way of excuse for her lateness. She was hardly at all concerned about it.

"Bah! It's not the first time."

"The first time that . . . what?"

"That I have been late," she said, put out by the question. He dared not ask her what had caused her lateness.

"What will you tell her?"

"That my mother is ill, dead . . . how do I know?"

He was hurt by her talking so lightly.

"I don't want you to lie."

She took offense:

"First of all, I never lie. . . . And then, I cannot very well tell her . . ."

He asked her half in jest, half in earnest:

"Why not?"

She laughed, shrugged, and said that he was coarse and ill-bred, and that she had already asked him not to use the *Du* to her.

"Haven't I the right?"

"Certainly not."

"After what has happened?"

"Nothing has happened."

She looked at him a little defiantly and laughed: and although she was joking, he felt most strongly that it would not have cost her much to say it seriously and almost to believe it. But some pleasant memory tickled her: for she burst out laughing and looked at Christophe and kissed him loudly without any concern for the people about, who did not seem to be in the least surprised by it.

He began to go to her rooms in the evening. Myrrha would be there, for she lived in the same house. Myrrha was not at all resentful against him: she would hold out her soft hand caressingly, and talk of trivial and improper things and then slip away discreetly. The two women had never seemed to be such friends as since they had had small reason for being so: they were always together. Ada had no secrets from Myrrha: she told her everything: Myrrha listened to everything: they seemed to be equally pleased with it all.

Ada soon began to weary of it. She was not clever enough to find new food for her love in an abundant nature like that of Christophe. Her senses and her vanity had extracted from it all the pleasure they could find in it. There was left her only the pleasure of destroying it.

Ada then would have liked to corrupt Christophe a little, to humiliate him. In truth, she was not strong enough. More intelligence was needed, even in corruption. She felt that: and it was not the least of her rankling feelings against Christophe that her love could do him no harm. She did not admit the desire that was in her to do him harm: perhaps she would have done him none if she had been able. But it annoyed her that she could not do it. It is to fail in love for a woman not to leave her the illusion of her power for good or evil over her lover: to do that must inevitably be to impel her irresistibly to the test of it. Christophe paid no attention to it. When Ada asked him jokingly:

“Would you leave your music for me?”

(Although she had no wish for him to do so.)

He replied frankly:

“No, my dear: neither you nor anybody else can do anything against that. I shall always make music.”

“And you say you love?” cried she, put out.

She hated his music—the more so because she did not understand it, and it was impossible for her to find a means of coming to grips with this invisible enemy and so to wound Christophe in his passion. If she tried to talk of it contemptuously, or scornfully to judge Christophe’s compositions, he would shout with laughter; and in spite of her

exasperation Ada would relapse into silence: for she saw that she was being ridiculous.

But if there was nothing to be done in that direction, she had discovered another weak spot in Christophe, one more easy of access: his moral faith. In spite of the intoxication of his adolescence, Christophe had preserved an instinctive modesty, a need of purity, of which he was entirely unconscious. At first it struck Ada, attracted and charmed her, then made her impatient and irritable, and finally, being the woman she was, she detested it. She did not make a frontal attack. She would ask insidiously:

"Do you love me?"

"Of course!"

"How much do you love me?"

"As much as it is possible to love."

"That is not much . . . after all! . . . What would you do for me?"

"Whatever you like."

"Would you do something dishonest?"

"That would be a queer way of loving."

"That is not what I asked. Would you?"

"It is not necessary."

"But if I wished it?"

"You would be wrong."

"Perhaps. . . . Would you do it?"

He tried to kiss her. But she thrust him away.

"Would you do it? Yes or no?"

"No, my dear."

She turned her back on him and was furious.

"You do not love me. You do not know what love is."

"That is quite possible," he said good-humoredly. He knew that, like anybody else, he was capable in a moment of passion of committing some folly, perhaps something dishonest, and—who knows?—even more: but he would have thought shame of himself if he had boasted of it in cold blood, and certainly it would be dangerous to confess it to Ada. Some instinct warned him that the beloved foe was lying in ambush, and taking stock of his smallest remark: he would not give her any weapon against him.

One day Christophe's younger brother Ernest, of whom they had not heard for a long time, suddenly turned up. He was out of work, having been dismissed in turn from all the situations he had procured: his purse was empty and his health ruined; and so he had thought it would be as well to re-establish himself in his mother's house.

Ernest was not on bad terms with either of his brothers: they thought very little of him and he knew it: but he did not bear any grudge against them, for he did not care. They had no ill-feeling against him. It was not worth the trouble. Everything they said to him slipped off his back without leaving a mark. He just smiled with his sly eyes, tried to look contrite, thought of something else, agreed, thanked them, and in the end always managed to extort money from one or other of them. In spite of himself Christophe was fond of the pleasant mortal who, like himself, and more than himself, resembled their father Melchior in feature. Tall and strong like Christophe, he had regular features, a frank expression, a straight nose, a laughing mouth, fine teeth, and endearing manners. When even Christophe saw him he was disarmed and could not deliver half the reproaches that he had prepared: in his heart he had a sort of motherly indulgence for the handsome boy who was of his blood, and physically at all events did him credit. He did not believe him to be bad: and Ernest was not a fool. Without culture, he was not without brains: he was even not incapable of taking an interest in the things of the mind. He enjoyed listening to music: and without understanding his brother's compositions he would listen to them with interest. Christophe, who did not receive too much sympathy from his family, had been glad to see him at some of his concerts.

But Ernest's chief talent was the knowledge that he possessed of the character of his two brothers, and his skill in making use of his knowledge. It was no use Christophe knowing Ernest's egoism and indifference: it was no use his seeing that Ernest never thought of his mother or himself except when he had need of them: he was always taken in by his affectionate ways and very rarely did he refuse him

anything. He much preferred him to his other brother Rodolphe, who was orderly and correct, assiduous in his business, strictly moral, never asked for money, and never gave any either, visited his mother regularly every Sunday, stayed an hour, and only talked about himself, boasting about himself, his firm, and everything that concerned him, never asking about the others, and taking no interest in them, and going away when the hour was up, quite satisfied with having done his duty. Christophe could not bear him. He always arranged to be out when Rodolphe came. Rodolphe was jealous of him: he despised artists, and Christophe's success really hurt him, though he did not fail to turn his small fame to account in the commercial circles in which he moved: but he never said a word about it either to his mother or to Christophe: he pretended to ignore it. On the other hand, he never ignored the least of the unpleasant things that happened to Christophe. Christophe despised such pettiness, and pretended not to notice it: but it would really have hurt him to know, though he never thought about it, that much of the unpleasant information that Rodolphe had about him came from Ernest. The young rascal fed the differences between Christophe and Rodolphe: no doubt he recognized Christophe's superiority and perhaps even sympathized a little ironically with his candor. But he took good care to turn it to account: and while he despised Rodolphe's ill-feeling he exploited it shamefully. He flattered his vanity and jealousy, accepted his rebukes deferentially and kept him primed with the scandalous gossip of the town, especially with everything concerning Christophe,—of which he was always marvelously informed. So he attained his ends, and Rodolphe, in spite of his avarice, allowed Ernest to despoil him just as Christophe did.

So Ernest made use and a mock of them both, impartially. And so both of them loved him.

Little by little in the long evenings that he spent with Ernest Christophe began to talk intimately to him. He needed to confide in somebody. Ernest was clever: he had a quick mind and understood—or seemed to understand—

on a hint only. There was pleasure in talking to him. And yet Christophe dared not tell him about what lay nearest to his heart: his love. He was kept back by a sort of modesty. Ernest, who knew all about it, never let it appear that he knew. ?

One day when Ernest was quite well again he went in the sunny afternoon and lounged along the Rhine. As he passed a noisy inn a little way out of the town, where there were drinking and dancing on Sundays, he saw Christophe sitting with Ada and Myrrha, who were making a great noise. Christophe saw him too, and blushed. Ernest was discreet and passed on without acknowledging him.

Christophe was much embarrassed by the encounter: it made him more keenly conscious of the company in which he was: it hurt him that his brother should have seen him then: not only because it made him lose the right of judging Ernest's conduct, but because he had a very lofty, very naïve, and rather archaic notion of his duties as an elder brother which would have seemed absurd to many people: he thought that in failing in that duty, as he was doing, he was lowered in his own eyes.

In the evening when they were together in their room, he waited for Ernest to allude to what had happened. But Ernest prudently said nothing and waited also. Then while they were undressing Christophe decided to speak about his love. He was so ill at ease that he dared not look at Ernest: and in his shyness he assumed a gruff way of speaking. Ernest did not help him out: he was silent and did not look at him, though he watched him all the same: and he missed none of the humor of Christophe's awkwardness and clumsy words. Christophe hardly dared pronounce Ada's name: and the portrait that he drew of her would have done just as well for any woman who was loved. But he spoke of his love: little by little he was carried away by the flood of tenderness that filled his heart: he said how good it was to love, how wretched he had been before he had found that light in the darkness, and that life was nothing without a dear, deep-seated love. His brother listened gravely: he replied tactfully, and asked no questions: but a warm hand-

shake showed that he was of Christophe's way of thinking. They exchanged ideas concerning love and life. Christophe was happy at being so well understood. They exchanged a brotherly embrace before they went to sleep.

Christophe grew accustomed to confiding his love to Ernest, though always shyly and reservedly. Ernest's discretion reassured him. He let him know his uneasiness about Ada: but he never blamed her: he blamed himself: and with tears in his eyes he would declare that he could not live if he were to lose her.

He did not forget to tell Ada about Ernest: he praised his wit and his good looks.

Ernest never approached Christophe with a request to be introduced to Ada: but he would shut himself up in his room and sadly refuse to go out, saying that he did not know anybody. Christophe would think ill of himself on Sundays for going on his excursions with Ada, while his brother stayed at home. And yet he hated not to be alone with his beloved: he accused himself of selfishness and proposed that Ernest should come with them.

The introduction took place at Ada's door, on the landing. Ernest and Ada bowed politely. Ada came out, followed by her inseparable Myrrha, who when she saw Ernest gave a little cry of surprise. Ernest smiled, went up to Myrrha, and kissed her: she seemed to take it as a matter of course.

"What! You know each other?" asked Christophe in astonishment.

"Why, yes!" said Myrrha, laughing.

"Since when?"

"Oh, a long time!"

"And you knew?" asked Christophe, turning to Ada.

"Why did you not tell me?"

"Do you think I know all Myrrha's lovers?" said Ada, shrugging her shoulders.

Myrrha took up the word and pretended in fun to be angry. Christophe could not find out any more about it. He was depressed. It seemed to him that Ernest and Myrrha and Ada had been lacking in honesty, although indeed

he could not have brought any lie up against them: but it was difficult to believe that Myrrha, who had no secrets from Ada, had made a mystery of this, and that Ernest and Ada were not already acquainted with each other. He watched them. But they only exchanged a few trivial words and Ernest only paid attention to Myrrha all the rest of the day. Ada only spoke to Christophe: and she was much more amiable to him than usual.

From that time on Ernest always joined them. Christophe could have done without him: but he dared not say so. He had no other motive for wanting to leave his brother out than his shame in having him for boon companion. He had no suspicion of him. Ernest gave him no cause for it: he seemed to be in love with Myrrha and was always reserved and polite with Ada, and even affected to avoid her in a way that was a little out of place: it was as though he wished to show his brother's mistress a little of the respect he showed to himself. Ada was not surprised by it and was none the less careful.

They went on long excursions together. The two brothers would walk on in front. Ada and Myrrha, laughing and whispering, would follow a few yards behind. They would stop in the middle of the road and talk. Christophe and Ernest would stop and wait for them. Christophe would lose patience and go on: but soon he would turn back annoyed and irritated, by hearing Ernest talking and laughing with the two young women. He would want to know what they were saying: but when they came up with him their conversation would stop.

"What are you three always plotting together?" he would ask.

They would reply with some joke. They had a secret understanding like thieves at a fair.

They reached a clearing in the forest. There were two paths. Christophe took one. Ernest declared that the other led more quickly to the top of the hill whither they were going. Ada agreed with him. Christophe, who knew the way, having often been there, maintained that they were wrong. They did not yield. Then they agreed to try it:

and each wagered that he would arrive first. Ada went with Ernest. Myrrha accompanied Christophe: she pretended that she was sure that he was right: and she added, "As usual." Christophe had taken the game seriously: and as he never liked to lose, he walked quickly, too quickly for Myrrha's liking, for she was in much less of a hurry than he.

"Don't be in a hurry, my friend," she said, in her quiet, ironic voice, "we shall get there first."

He was a little sorry.

"True," he said, "I am going a little too fast: there is no need."

He slackened his pace.

"But I know them," he went on. "I am sure they will run so as to be there before us."

Myrrha burst out laughing.

"Oh! no," she said. "Oh! no: don't you worry about that."

She hung on his arm and pressed close to him. She was a little shorter than Christophe, and as they walked she raised her soft eyes to his. She was really pretty and alluring. He hardly recognized her: the change was extraordinary. Usually her face was rather pale and puffy: but the smallest excitement, a merry thought, or the desire to please, was enough to make her worn expression vanish, and her cheeks go pink, and the little wrinkles in her eyelids round and below her eyes disappear, and her eyes flash, and her whole face take on a youth, a life, a spiritual quality that never was in Ada's. Christophe was surprised by this metamorphosis, and turned his eyes away from hers: he was a little uneasy at being alone with her. She embarrassed him and prevented him from dreaming as he pleased: he did not listen to what she said, he did not answer her, or if he did it was only at random: he was thinking—he wished to think only of Ada. Everything brought her to mind. . . . It was a little damp: would she not be cold? . . . The lovely trees were powdered with hoar-frost: what a pity she should not see them! . . . But he remembered the wager, and hurried on: he was concerned only with not los-

ing the way. He shouted joyfully as they reached the goal:

"We are first!"

He waved his hat gleefully. Myrrha watched him and smiled.

The place where they stood was a high, steep rock in the middle of the woods. From this flat summit with its fringe of nut-trees and little stunted oaks they could see, over the wooded slopes, the tops of the pines bathed in a purple mist, and the long ribbon of the Rhine in the blue valley. Not a bird called. Not a voice. Not a breath of air. A still, calm winter's day, its chilliness faintly warmed by the pale beams of a misty sun. Now and then in the distance there came the sharp whistle of a train in the valley. Christophe stood at the edge of the rock and looked down at the countryside. Myrrha watched Christophe.

He turned to her amiably:

"Well! The lazy things. I told them so! . . . Well: we must wait for them. . . ."

He lay stretched out in the sun on the cracked earth.

"Yes. Let us wait . . ." said Myrrha, taking off her hat.

In her voice there was something so quizzical that he raised his head and looked at her.

"What is it?" she asked quietly.

"What did you say?"

"I said: Let us wait. It was no use making me run so fast."

"True."

They waited lying on the rough ground. Myrrha hummed a tune. Christophe took it up for a few phrases. But he stopped every now and then to listen.

"I think I can hear them."

Myrrha went on singing.

"Do stop for a moment."

Myrrha stopped.

"No. It is nothing."

She went on with her song.

Christophe could not stay still.

"Perhaps they have lost their way."

"Lost? They could not. Ernest knows all the paths."

A fantastic idea passed through Christophe's mind.

"Perhaps they arrived first, and went away before we came!"

Myrrha was lying on her back and looking at the sun. She was seized with a wild burst of laughter in the middle of her song and all but choked. Christophe insisted. He wanted to go down to the station, saying that their friends would be there already. Myrrha at last made up her mind to move.

"You would be certain to lose them! . . . There was never any talk about the station. We were to meet here."

He sat down by her side. She was amused by his eagerness. He was conscious of the irony in her gaze as she looked at him. He began to be seriously troubled—to be anxious about them: he did not suspect them. He got up once more. He spoke of going down into the woods again and looking for them, calling to them. Myrrha gave a little chuckle: she took from her pocket a needle, scissors, and thread: and she calmly undid and sewed in again the feathers in her hat: she seemed to have established herself for the day.

"No, no, silly," she said. "If they wanted to come do you think they would not come of their own accord?"

There was a catch at his heart. He turned towards her: she did not look at him: she was busy with her work. He went up to her.

"Myrrha!" he said.

"Eh?" she replied without stopping. He knelt now to look more nearly at her.

"Myrrha!" he repeated.

"Well?" she asked, raising her eyes from her work and looking at him with a smile. "What is it?"

She had a mocking expression as she saw his downcast face.

"Myrrha!" he asked, choking, "tell me what you think . . ."

She shrugged her shoulders, smiled, and went on working.

He caught her hands and took away the hat at which she was sewing.

"Leave off, leave off, and tell me. . . ."

She looked squarely at him and waited. She saw that Christophe's lips were trembling.

"You think," he said in a low voice, "that Ernest and Ada . . . ?"

She smiled.

"Oh! well!"

He started back angrily.

"No! No! It is impossible! You don't think that! . . . No! No!"

She put her hands on his shoulders and rocked with laughter.

"How dense you are, how dense, my dear!"

He shook her violently.

"Don't laugh! Why do you laugh? You would not laugh if it were true. You love Ernest. . . ."

She went on laughing and drew him to her and kissed him. In spite of himself he returned her kiss. But when he felt her lips on his, her lips, still warm with his brother's kisses, he flung her away from him and held her face away from his own: he asked:

"You knew it? It was arranged between you?"

She said "Yes," and laughed.

Christophe did not cry out, he made no movement of anger. He opened his mouth as though he could not breathe: he closed his eyes and clutched at his breast with his hands: his heart was bursting. Then he lay down on the ground with his face buried in his hands and he was shaken by a crisis of disgust and despair like a child.

Myrrha, who was not very soft-hearted, was sorry for him: involuntarily she was filled with motherly compassion, and leaned over him, and spoke affectionately to him, and tried to make him sniff at her smelling-bottle. But he thrust her away in horror and got up so sharply that she was afraid. He had neither strength nor desire for revenge. He looked at her with his face twisted with grief.

"You drab," he said in despair. "You do not know the harm you have done. . . ."

She tried to hold him back. He fled through the woods, spitting out his disgust with such ignominy, with such muddy hearts, with such incestuous sharing as that to which they had tried to bring him. He wept, he trembled: he sobbed with disgust. He was filled with horror, of them all, of himself, of his body and soul. A storm of contempt broke loose in him: it had long been brewing: sooner or later there had to come the reaction against the base thoughts, the degrading compromises, the stale and pestilential atmosphere in which he had been living for months: but the need of loving, of deceiving himself about the woman he loved, had postponed the crisis as long as possible. Suddenly it burst upon him: and it was better so. There was a great gust of wind of a biting purity, an icy breeze which swept away the miasma. Disgust in one swoop had killed his love for Ada.

If Ada thought more firmly to establish her domination over Christophe by such an act, that proved once more her gross inappreciation of her lover. Jealousy which binds souls that are besmirched could only revolt a nature like Christophe's, young, proud, and pure. But what he could not forgive, what he never would forgive, was that the betrayal was not the outcome of passion in Ada, hardly even of one of those absurd and degrading though often irresistible caprices to which the reason of a woman is sometimes hard put to it not to surrender. No—he understood now,—it was in her a secret desire to degrade him, to humiliate him, to punish him for his moral resistance, for his inimical faith, to lower him to the common level, to bring him to her feet, to prove to herself her own power for evil. And he asked himself with horror: what is this impulse towards dirtiness, which is in the majority of human beings—this desire to besmirch the purity of themselves and others,—these swinish souls, who take a delight in rolling in filth, and are happy when not one inch of their skins is left clean! . . .

Ada waited two days for Christophe to return to her.

Then she began to be anxious, and sent him a tender note in which she made no allusion to what had happened. Christophe did not even reply. He hated Ada so profoundly that no words could express his hatred. He had cut her out of his life. She no longer existed for him.

II GOTTFRIED

Christophe was free of Ada, but he was not free of himself. In vain did he try to return into illusion and to take up again the calm and chaste strength of the past. We cannot return to the past. We have to go onward: it is useless to turn back, save only to see the places by which we have passed, the distant smoke from the roofs under which we have slept, dying away on the horizon in the mists of memory. But nothing so distances us from the soul that we had as a few months of passion. The road takes a sudden turn: the country is changed: it is as though we were saying good-bye for the last time to all that we are leaving behind.

Christophe could not yield to it. He held out his arms to the past: he strove desperately to bring to life again the soul that had been his, lonely and resigned. But it was gone. Passion itself is not so dangerous as the ruins that it heaps up and leaves behind. In vain did Christophe not love, in vain—for a moment—did he despise love: he bore the marks of its talons: his whole being was steeped in it: there was in his heart a void which must be filled. With that terrible need of tenderness and pleasure which devours men and women when they have once tasted it, some other passion was needed were it only the contrary passion, the passion of contempt, of proud purity, of faith in virtue.—They were not enough, they were not enough to stay his hunger: they were only the food of a moment. His life consisted of a succession of violent reactions—leaps from one extreme to the other. Sometimes he would bend his passion to rules inhumanly ascetic: not eating, drinking water, wearing himself out with walking, heavy tasks, and so not sleeping, denying himself every sort of pleasure.

Sometimes he would persuade himself that strength is the true morality for people like himself: and he would plunge into the quest of joy. In either case he was unhappy. He could no longer be alone. He could no longer not be alone.

And now there sprang up in him his hereditary fires, the vices of those who had gone before him.—He got drunk. He would return home smelling of wine, laughing, in a state of collapse.

Poor Louisa would look at him, sigh, say nothing, and pray.

But one evening when he was coming out of an inn by the gates of the town he saw, a few yards in front of him on the road, the droll shadow of his uncle Gottfried, with his pack on his back. The little man had not been home for months, and his periods of absence were growing longer and longer. Christophe hailed him gleefully. Gottfried, bending under his load, turned round: he looked at Christophe, who was making extravagant gestures, and sat down on a milestone to wait for him. Christophe came up to him with a beaming face, skipping along, and shook his uncle's hand with great demonstrations of affection. Gottfried took a long look at him and then he said:

"Good-day, Melchior."

Christophe thought his uncle had made a mistake, and burst out laughing.

"The poor man is breaking up," he thought; "he is losing his memory."

Indeed, Gottfried did look old, shriveled, shrunken, and dried: his breathing came short and painfully. Christophe went on talking. Gottfried took his pack on his shoulders again and went on in silence. They went home together, Christophe gesticulating and talking at the top of his voice, Gottfried coughing and saying nothing. And when Christophe questioned him, Gottfried still called him Melchior. And then Christophe asked him:

"What do you mean by calling me Melchior? My name is Christophe, you know. Have you forgotten my name?"

Gottfried did not stop. He raised his eyes toward Chris-

tophe and looked at him, shook his head, and said coldly: "No. You are Melchior: I know you."

Christophe stopped dumfounded. Gottfried trotted along: Christophe followed him without a word. He was sobered. As they passed the door of a café he went up to the dark panes of glass, in which the gas-jets of the entrance and the empty streets were reflected, and he looked at himself: he recognized Melchior. He went home crushed.

He spent the night—a night of anguish—in examining himself, in soul-searching. He understood now. Yes: he recognized the instincts and vices that had come to light in him: they horrified him. He thought of that dark watching by the body of Melchior, of all that he had sworn to do, and, surveying his life since then, he knew that he had failed to keep his vows. What had he done in the year? What had he done for his God, for his art, for his soul? What had he done for eternity? There was not a day that had not been wasted, botched, besmirched. Not a single piece of work, not a thought, not an effort of enduring quality. A chaos of desires destructive of each other. Wind, dust, nothing. . . . What did his intentions avail him? He had fulfilled none of them. He had done exactly the opposite of what he had intended. He had become what he had no wish to be: that was the balance-sheet of his life.

He did not go to bed. About six in the morning it was still dark,—he heard Gottfried getting ready to depart.—For Gottfried had had no intentions of staying on. As he was passing the town he had come as usual to embrace his sister and nephew: but he had announced that he would go on next morning.

Christophe went downstairs. Gottfried saw his pale face and his eyes hollow with a night of torment. He smiled fondly at him and asked him to go a little of the way with him. They set out together before dawn. They had no need to talk: they understood each other. As they passed the cemetery Gottfried said:

"Shall we go in?"

When he came to the place he never failed to pay a visit

to Jean Michel and Melchior. Christophe had not been there for a year. Gottfried knelt by Melchior's grave and said:

"Let us pray that they may sleep well and not come to torment us."

His thought was a mixture of strange superstitions and sound sense: sometimes it surprised Christophe: but now it was only too clear to him. They said no more until they left the cemetery.

When they had closed the creaking gate, and were walking along the wall through the cold fields, waking from slumber, by the little path which led them under the cypress trees from which the snow was dropping, Christophe began to weep.

"Oh! uncle," he said, "how wretched I am!"

He dared not speak of his experience in love, from an odd fear of embarrassing or hurting Gottfried: but he spoke of his shame, his mediocrity, his cowardice, his broken vows.

"What am I to do, uncle? I have tried, I have struggled: and after a year I am no further on than before. Worse: I have gone back. I am good for nothing. I am good for nothing! I have ruined my life. I am perjured! . . ."

They were walking up the hill above the town. Gottfried said kindly:

"Not for the last time, my boy. We do not do what we will to do. We will and we live: two things. You must be comforted. The great thing is, you see, never to give up willing and living. The rest does not depend on us."

Christophe repeated desperately:

"I have perjured myself."

"Do you hear?" said Gottfried.

(The cocks were crowing in all the countryside.)

"They, too, are crowing for another who is perjured. They crow for every one of us, every morning."

"A day will come," said Christophe bitterly, "when they will no longer crow for me. . . . A day to which there is no to-morrow. And what shall I have made of my life?"

"There is always a to-morrow," said Gottfried.

"But what can one do, if willing is no use?"

"Watch and pray."

"I do not believe."

Gottfried smiled.

"You would not be alive if you did not believe. Every one believes. Pray."

"Pray to what?"

Gottfried pointed to the sun appearing on the horizon, red and frozen.

"Be reverent before the dawning day. Do not think of what will be in a year, or in ten years. Think of to-day. Leave your theories. All theories, you see, even those of virtue, are bad, foolish, mischievous. Do not abuse life. Live in to-day. Be reverent towards each day. Love it, respect it, do not sully it, do not hinder it from coming to flower. Love it even when it is gray and sad like to-day. Do not be anxious. See. It is winter now. Everything is asleep. The good earth will awake again. You have only to be good and patient like the earth. Be reverent. Wait. If you are good, all will go well. If you are not, if you are weak, if you do not succeed, well, you must be happy in that. No doubt it is the best you can do. So, then, why *will*? Why be angry because of what you cannot do? We all have to do what we can. . . . *Als ich kann.*"

"It is not enough," said Christophe, making a face.

Gottfried laughed pleasantly.

"It is more than anybody does. You are a vain fellow. You want to be a hero. That is why you do such silly things. . . . A hero! . . . I don't quite know what that is: but, you see, I imagine that a hero is a man who does what he can. The others do not do it."

"Oh!" sighed Christophe. "Then what is the good of living? It is not worth while. And yet there are people who say: 'He who wills can!'" . . .

Gottfried laughed again softly.

"Yes? . . . Oh! well, they are liars, my friend. Or they do not will anything much. . . ."

They had reached the top of the hill. They embraced affectionately. The little peddler went on, treading wearily.

Christophe stayed there, lost in thought, and watched him go. He repeated his uncle's saying:

"Als ich kann (The best I can)."

And he smiled, thinking:

"Yes. . . . All the same. . . . It is enough."

He returned to the town. The frozen snow crackled under his feet. The bitter winter wind made the bare branches of the stunted trees on the hill shiver. It reddened his cheeks, and made his skin tingle, and set his blood racing. The red roofs of the town below were smiling under the brilliant, cold sun. The air was strong and harsh. The frozen earth seemed to rejoice in bitter gladness. And Christophe's heart was like that. He thought:

"I, too, shall wake again."

There were still tears in his eyes. He dried them with the back of his hand, and laughed to see the sun dipping down behind a veil of mist. The clouds, heavy with snow, were floating over the town, lashed by the squall. He laughed at them. The wind blew icily. . . .

"Blow, blow! . . . Do what you will with me. Bear me with you! . . . I know now where I am going."

REVOLT

I SHIFTING SANDS

Free! He felt that he was free! . . . Free of others and of himself! The network of passion in which he had been enmeshed for more than a year had suddenly been burst asunder. How? He did not know. The filaments had given before the growth of his being. It was one of those crises

of growth in which robust natures tear away the dead casing of the year that is past, the old soul in which they are cramped and stifled.

Christophe breathed deeply, without understanding what had happened. An icy whirlwind was rushing through the great gate of the town as he returned from taking Gottfried on his way. The people were walking with heads lowered against the storm. Girls going to their work were struggling against the wind that blew against their skirts: they stopped every now and then to breathe, with their noses and cheeks red, and they looked exasperated, and as though they wanted to cry. He thought of that other torment through which he had passed. He looked at the wintry sky, the town covered with snow, the people struggling along past him: he looked about him, into himself: he was no longer bound. He was alone! . . . Alone! How happy to be alone, to be his own! What joy to have escaped from his bonds, from his torturing memories, from the hallucinations of faces that he loved or detested! What joy at last to live, without being the prey of life, to have become his own master! . . .

He went home white with snow. He shook himself gaily like a dog. As he passed his mother, who was sweeping the passage, he lifted her up, giving little inarticulate cries of affection such as one makes to a tiny child. Poor old Louisa struggled in her son's arms: she was wet with the melting snow: and she called him, with a jolly laugh, a great baby.

He went up to his room three steps at a time.—He could hardly see himself in his little mirror it was so dark. But his heart was glad. His room was low and narrow and it was difficult to move in it, but it was like a kingdom to him. He locked the door and laughed with pleasure. At last he was finding himself! How long he had been gone astray! He was eager to plunge into thought like a bather into water. It was like a great lake afar off melting into the mists of blue and gold. After a night of fever and oppressive heat he stood by the edge of it, with his legs bathed in the freshness of the water, his body kissed by the wind

of a summer morning. He plunged in and swam: he knew not whither he was going, and did not care: it was joy to swim whithersoever he listed. He was silent, then he laughed, and listened for the thousand thousand sounds of his soul: it swarmed with life. He could make out nothing: his head was swimming: he felt only a bewildering happiness. He was glad to feel in himself such unknown forces: and indolently postponing putting his powers to the test he sank back into the intoxication of pride in the inward flowering, which, held back for months, now burst forth like a sudden spring.

His mother called him to breakfast. He went down: he was giddy and light-headed as though he had spent a day in the open air: but there was such a radiance of joy in him that Louisa asked what was the matter. He made no reply: he seized her by the waist and forced her to dance with him round the table on which the tureen was steaming. Out of breath Louisa cried that he was mad: then she clasped her hands.

"Dear God!" she said anxiously. "Sure, he is in love again!"

Christophe roared with laughter. He hurled his napkin into the air.

"In love? . . ." he cried. "Oh! Lord! . . . but no! I've had enough! You can be easy on that score. That is done, done, forever! . . . Ouf!"

He drank a glassful of water.

Louisa looked at him, reassured, wagged her head, and smiled.

"That's a drunkard's pledge," she said. "It won't last until to-night."

"Then the day is clear gain," he replied good-humoredly.

"Oh, yes!" she said. "But what has made you so happy?"

"I am happy. That is all."

Sitting opposite her with his elbows on the table he tried to tell her all that he was going to do. She listened with kindly skepticism and gently pointed out that his soup was going cold. He knew that she did not hear what he was

saying: but he did not care: he was talking for his own satisfaction.

They looked at each other smiling: he talking: she hardly listening. Although she was proud of her son she attached no great importance to his artistic projects: she was thinking: "He is happy: that matters most."—While he was growing more and more excited with his discourse he watched his mother's dear face, with her black shawl tightly tied round her head, her white hair, her young eyes that devoured him lovingly, her sweet and tranquil kindness. He knew exactly what she was thinking. He said to her jokingly:

"It is all one to you, eh? You don't care about what I'm telling you?"

She protested weakly:

"Oh, no! Oh, no!"

He kissed her.

"Oh, yes! Oh, yes! You need not defend yourself. You are right. Only love me. There is no need to understand me—either for you or for anybody else. I do not need anybody or anything now: I have everything in myself. . . ."

"Oh!" said Louisa. "Another maggot in his brain! . . . But if he must have one I prefer this to the other."

He wished to seize his dreams.—How to begin? They seemed to him all equally important. He turned and turned them: he rejected them, he took them up again. . . . No, he never took them up again: they were no longer the same, they were never to be caught twice: they were always changing: they changed in his hands, under his eyes, while he was watching them. He must make haste: he could not: he was appalled by the slowness with which he worked. He would have liked to do everything in one day, and he found it horribly difficult to complete the smallest thing. His dreams were passing and he was passing himself: while he was doing one thing it worried him not to be doing another. It was as though it was enough to have chosen

one of his fine subjects for it to lose all interest for him. And so all his riches availed him nothing. His thoughts had life only on condition that he did not tamper with them: everything that he succeeded in doing was still-born. It was the torment of Tantalus: within reach were fruits that became stones as soon as he plucked them: near his lips was a clear stream which sank away whenever he bent down to drink.

He groped his way, head down, borne on by the contradictory forces warring in him, and hurling into his incoherent works a fiery and strong quality of life which he could not express, though he was joyously and proudly conscious of it.

The consciousness of his new vigor made him able for the first time to envisage squarely everything about him, everything that he had been taught to honor, everything that he had respected without question: and he judged it all with insolent freedom. The veil was rent: he saw the German lie.

Every race, every art has its hypocrisy. The world is fed with a little truth and many lies. The human mind is feeble: pure truth agrees with it but ill: its religion, its morality, its states, its poets, its artists, must all be presented to it swathed in lies. These lies are adapted to the mind of each race: they vary from one to the other: it is they that make it so difficult for nations to understand each other, and so easy for them to despise each other. Truth is the same for all of us: but every nation has its own lie, which it calls its idealism: every creature therein breathes it from birth to death: it has become a condition of life: there are only a few men of genius who can break free from it through heroic moments of crisis, when they are alone in the free world of their thoughts.

It was a trivial thing which suddenly revealed to Christophe the lie of German art. It was not because it had not always been visible that he had not seen it: he was not near it, he had not recoiled from it. Now the mountain appeared to his gaze because he had moved away from it.

Christophe was passing through a crisis of healthy dis-

gust. His instinct was impelling him to eliminate from his life all the undigested elements which encumbered it.

First of all to go was that sickening sweet tenderness which sucked away the soul of Germany like a damp and moldy riverbed. Light! Light! A rough, dry wind which should sweep away the miasmas of the swamp, the misty staleness of the *Lieder*, *Liedchen*, *Liedlein*, as numerous as drops of rain in which inexhaustibly the Germanic *Gemüt* is poured forth: the countless things like *Sehnsucht* (Desire), *Heimweh* (Homesickness), *Aufschwung* (Soaring), *Frage* (A question), *Warum?* (Why?), *An den Mond* (To the Moon), *An die Sterne* (To the Stars), *An die Nachtigall* (To the Nightingale), *An den Frühling* (To Spring), *An den Sonnenschein* (To Sunshine): like *Frühlingslied* (Spring song), *Frühlingslust* (Delights of Spring), *Frühlingsgruss* (Hail to the Spring), *Frühlingsfahrt* (A Spring Journey), *Frühlingsnacht* (A Spring Night), *Frühlingsbotschaft* (The Message of Spring): like *Stimme der Liebe* (The Voice of Love), *Sprache der Liebe* (The Language of Love), *Trauer der Liebe* (Love's Sorrow), *Geist der Liebe* (The Spirit of Love), *Fülle der Liebe* (The Fullness of Love): like *Blumenlied* (The Song of the Flowers), *Blumenbrief* (The Letter of the Flowers), *Blumengruss* (Flowers' Greeting): like *Herzeleid* (Heart Pangs), *Mein Herz ist schwer* (My Heart is Heavy), *Mein Herz ist betrübt* (My Heart is Troubled), *Mein Aug' ist trüb* (My Eye is Heavy): like the candid and silly dialogues with the *Röselein* (The Little Rose), with the brook, with the turtle dove, with the lark: like those idiotic questions: "*If the briar could have no thorns?*"—"Is an old husband like a lark who has built a nest?"—"Is she newly plighted?": the whole deluge of stale tenderness, stale emotion, stale melancholy, stale poetry. . . . How many lovely things profaned, rare things, used in season or out! For the worst of it was that it was all useless: a habit of undressing their hearts in public, a fond and foolish propensity of the honest people of Germany for plunging loudly into confidences. With nothing to say they were always talking! Would their chatter never cease?—As well bid frogs in a pond be silent.

Christophe ended by hating all idealism. He preferred frank brutality to such lying. But at heart he was more of an idealist than the rest, and he had not—he could not have—any more real enemies than the brutal realists whom he thought he preferred.

And yet Christophe went on composing: and his compositions were not examples of the faults which he found in others. In him creation was an irresistible necessity which would not submit to the rules which his intelligence laid down for it. No man creates from reason, but from necessity.—It is not enough to have recognized the untruth and affectation inherent in the majority of the feelings to avoid falling into them: long and painful endeavor is necessary: nothing is more difficult than to be absolutely true in modern society with its crushing heritage of indolent habits handed down through generations. It is especially difficult for those people, those nations who are possessed by an indiscreet mania for letting their hearts speak—for making them speak—unceasingly, when most generally it had much better have been silent.

He wrote a quantity of small pieces, which were the immediate expression of passing emotions—the most eternal of all: musical thoughts, *Lieder*. In this as in other things he was in passionate reaction against current practices. He would take up the most famous poems, already set to music, and was impertinent enough to try to treat them differently and with greater truth than Schumann and Schubert. Sometimes he would try to give to the poetic figures of Goethe—to Mignon, the Harpist in *Wilhelm Meister*, their individual character, exact and changing. Sometimes he would tackle certain love songs which the weakness of the artists and the dullness of the audience in tacit agreement had clothed about with sickly sentimentality: and he would unclothe them: he would restore to them their rough, crude sensuality. In a word, he set out to make passions and people live for themselves and not to serve as toys for German families seeking an easy emotionalism on Sundays when they sat about in some *Biergarten*.

But generally he would find the poets, even the greatest

of them, too literary: and he would select the simplest texts for preference: texts of old *Lieder*, jolly old songs, which he had read perhaps in some improving work: he would take care not to preserve their choral character: he would treat them with a fine, lively, and altogether lay audacity. Or he would take words from the Gospel, or proverbs, sometimes even words heard by chance, scraps of dialogues of the people, children's thoughts: words often awkward and prosaic in which there was only pure feeling. With them he was at his ease, and he would reach a depth with them which was not in his other compositions, a depth which he himself never suspected.

Good or bad, more often bad than good, his works as a whole had abounding vitality. They were not altogether new: far from it. Christophe was often banal, through his very sincerity: he repeated sometimes forms already used because they exactly rendered his thought, because he also felt in that way and not otherwise. Nothing would have induced him to try to be original: it seemed to him that a man must be very commonplace to burden himself with such an idea. He tried to be himself, to say what he felt, without worrying as to whether what he said had been said before him or not. He took a pride in believing that it was the best way of being original and that Christophe had only been and only would be alive once. With the magnificent impudence of youth, nothing seemed to him to have been done before: and everything seemed to him to be left for doing—or for doing again. And the feeling of this inward fullness of life, of a life stretching endless before him, brought him to a state of exuberant and rather indiscreet happiness.

Christophe was conscious of it: and he showed his joy simply, impudently. He saw no harm in it, he only asked to share it with others. He did not see how such joy hurts the majority of men, who never can possess it and are always envious of it. For the rest he never bothered about pleasing or displeasing: he was sure of himself, and nothing seemed to him simpler than to communicate his conviction to others,—to conquer. Instinctively he compared

his riches with the general poverty of the makers of music: and he thought that it would be very easy to make his superiority recognized. Too easy, even. He had only to show himself.

He showed himself.

They were waiting for him.

Christophe had made no secret of his feelings. Since he had become aware of German Pharisaism, which refuses to see things as they are, he had made it a law for himself that he should be absolutely, continually, uncompromisingly sincere in everything without regard for anything or anybody or himself. And as he could do nothing without going to extremes, he was extravagant in his sincerity: he would say outrageous things and scandalize people a thousand times less naïve than himself. He never dreamed that it might annoy them. When he realized the idiocy of some hallowed composition he would make haste to impart his discovery to everybody he encountered: musicians of the orchestra, or amateurs of his acquaintance. He would pronounce the most absurd judgments with a beaming face. At first no one took him seriously: they laughed at his freaks. But it was not long before they found that he was always reverting to them, insisting on them in a way that was really bad taste. It became evident that Christophe believed in his paradoxes: and they became less amusing. He was a nuisance: at concerts he would make ironic remarks in a loud voice, or would express his scorn for the glorious masters in no veiled fashion wherever he might be.

Everything passed from mouth to mouth in the little town: not a word was lost. People were already affronted by his conduct during the past year. They had not forgotten the scandalous fashion in which he had shown himself abroad with Ada and the troublous times of the sequel. He had forgotten it himself: one day wiped out another, and he was very different from what he had been two months before. But others had not forgotten: those who, in all small towns, take upon themselves scrupulously to note down all the faults, all the imperfections, all the sad, ugly,

and unpleasant happenings concerning their neighbors, so that nothing is ever forgotten. Christophe's new extravagances were naturally set, side by side with his former indiscretions, in the scroll. The former explained the latter. The outraged feelings of offended morality were now bolstered up by those of scandalized good taste. The kindest of them said:

"He is trying to be particular."

But most alleged:

"*Total verrückt!*" (Absolutely mad.)

An opinion no less severe and even more dangerous was beginning to find currency—an opinion assured of success by reason of its illustrious origin: it was said that, at the Palace, whither Christophe still went upon his official duties, he had had the bad taste in conversation with the Grand Duke himself, with revolting lack of decency, to give vent to his ideas concerning the illustrious masters: it was said that he had called Mendelssohn's *Elijah* "a clerical humbug's paternoster," and he had called certain *Lieder* of Schumann "*Backfisch Musik*": and that in the face of the declared preference of the august Princess for those works! The Grand Duke had cut short his impertinences by saying dryly:

"To hear you, sir, one would doubt your being a German."

This vengeful utterance, coming from so lofty an eminence, reached the lowest depths: and everybody who thought he had reason to be annoyed with Christophe, either for his success, or for some more personal if not more cogent reason, did not fail to call to mind that he was not in fact pure German. His father's family, it was remembered, came originally from Belgium. It was not surprising, therefore, that this immigrant should decry the national glories. That explained everything and German vanity found reasons therein for greater self-esteem, and at the same time for despising its adversary.

Christophe himself most substantially fed this Platonic vengeance. It is very imprudent to criticise others when you are yourself on the point of challenging criticism. A

cleverer or less frank artist would have shown more modesty and more respect for his predecessors. But Christophe could see no reason for hiding his contempt for mediocrity or his joy in his own strength, and his joy was shown in no temperate fashion. Although from childhood Christophe had been turned in upon himself for want of any creature to confide in, of late he had come by a need of expansiveness. He had too much joy for himself: his breast was too small to contain it: he would have burst if he had not shared his delight. Failing a friend, he had confided in his colleague in the orchestra, the second *Kapellmeister*, Siegmund Ochs, a young Wurtemberger, a good fellow, though crafty, who showed him an effusive deference. Christophe did not distrust him: and, even if he had, how could it have occurred to him that it might be harmful to confide his joy to one who did not care, or even to an enemy? Ought they not rather to be grateful to him? Was it not for them also that he was working? He brought happiness for all, friends and enemies alike.—He had no idea that there is nothing more difficult than to make men accept a new happiness: they almost prefer their old misery: they need food that has been masticated for ages. But what is most intolerable to them is the thought that they owe such happiness to another. They cannot forgive that offense until there is no way of evading it: and in any case, they do contrive to make the giver pay dearly for it.

There were, then, a thousand reasons why Christophe's confidences should not be kindly received by anybody. But there were a thousand and one reasons why they should not be acceptable to Siegmund Ochs. The first *Kapellmeister*, Tobias Pfeiffer, was on the point of retiring: and, in spite of his youth, Christophe had every chance of succeeding him. Ochs was too good a German not to recognize that Christophe was worthy of the position, since the Court was on his side. But he had too good an opinion of himself not to believe that he would have been more worthy had the Court known him better. And so he received Christophe's effusions with a strange smile when he arrived at the theater in the morning with a face that he tried hard

to make serious, though it beamed in spite of himself.

"Well?" he would say slyly as he came up to him, "another masterpiece?"

Christophe would take his arm.

"Ah! my friend. It is the best of all. . . . If you could hear it! . . . Devil take me, it is too beautiful! There has never been anything like it. God help the poor audience! They will only long for one thing when they have heard it: to die."

His words did not fall upon deaf ears. Instead of smiling, or of chaffing Christophe about his childish enthusiasm—he would have been the first to laugh at it and beg pardon if he had been made to feel the absurdity of it—Ochs went into ironic ecstasies: he drew Christophe on to further enormities: and when he left him made haste to repeat them all, making them even more grotesque. The little circle of musicians chuckled over them: and every one was impatient for the opportunity of judging the unhappy compositions.—They were all judged beforehand.

At last they appeared—Christophe had chosen from the better of his works an overture to the *Judith* of Hebbel, the savage energy of which had attracted him, in his reaction against German atony, although he was beginning to lose his taste for it, knowing intuitively the unnaturalness of such assumption of genius, always and at all costs. He had added a symphony which bore the bombastic title of the Basle Boecklin, "*The Dream of Life*," and the motto: "*Vita somnium breve*." A song-cycle completed the programme, with a few classical works, and a *Festmarsch* by Ochs, which Christophe had kindly offered to include in his concert, though he knew it to be mediocre.

The day came. Christophe had no anxiety. He was too full of his music to be able to judge it. He realized that some of his works in certain places bordered on the ridiculous. But what did that matter? Nothing great can be written without touching the ridiculous. To reach the heart of things it is necessary to dare human respect, politeness, modesty, the timidity of social lies under which the heart is stifled. If nobody is to be affronted and success attained,

a man must be resigned all his life to remain bound by convention and to give to second-rate people the second-rate truth, mitigated, diluted, which they are capable of receiving: he must dwell in prison all his life. A man is great only when he has set his foot on such anxieties. Christophe trampled them underfoot. Let them hiss him: he was sure of not leaving them indifferent. He conjured up the faces that certain people of his acquaintance would make as they heard certain rather bold passages. He expected bitter criticism: he smiled at it already. In any case they would have to be blind—or deaf—to deny that there was force in it—pleasant or otherwise, what did it matter?—Pleasant! Pleasant! . . . Force! That is enough. Let it go its way, and bear all before it, like the Rhine! . . .

He had one setback. The Grand Duke did not come. The royal box was only occupied by Court people, a few ladies-in-waiting. Christophe was irritated by it. He thought: "The fool is cross with me. He does not know what to think of my work: he is afraid of compromising himself." He shrugged his shoulders, pretending not to be put out by such idiocy. Others paid more attention to it: it was the first lesson for him, a menace of his future.

The public had not shown much more interest than the Grand Duke: quite a third of the hall was empty. Christophe could not help thinking bitterly of the crowded halls at his concerts when he was a child. He would not have been surprised by the change if he had had more experience: it would have seemed natural to him that there were fewer people come to hear him when he made good music than when he made bad: for it is not music but the musician in which the greater part of the public is interested: and it is obvious that a musician who is a man and like everybody else is much less interesting than a musician in a child's little trousers or short frock, who tickles sentimentality or amuses idleness.

After waiting in vain for the hall to fill, Christophe decided to begin. He tried to pretend that it was better so, saying, "A few friends but good."—His optimism did not last long.

His pieces were played in silence.—There is a silence in an audience which seems big and overflowing with love. But there was nothing in this. Nothing. Utter sleep. Blankness. Every phrase seemed to drop into depths of indifference. With his back turned to the audience, busy with his orchestra, Christophe was fully aware of everything that was happening in the hall, with those inner antennæ, with which every true musician is endowed, so that he knows whether what he is playing is waking an echo in the hearts about him. He went on conducting and growing excited while he was frozen by the cold mist of boredom rising from the stalls and the boxes behind him.

At last the overture was ended: and the audience applauded. It applauded coldly, politely, and was then silent. Christophe would rather have had them hoot. . . . A hiss! One hiss! Anything to give a sign of life, or at least of reaction against his work! . . . Nothing.—He looked at the audience. The people were looking at each other, each trying to find out what the other thought. They did not succeed and relapsed into indifference.

The music went on. The symphony was played.—Christophe found it hard to go on to the end. Several times he was on the point of throwing down his bâton and running away. Their apathy overtook him: at last he could not understand what he was conducting: he could not breathe: he felt that he was falling into fathomless boredom. There was not even the whispered ironic comment which he had anticipated at certain passages: the audience were reading their programmes. Christophe heard the pages turned all together with a dry rustling: and then once more there was silence until the last chord, when the same polite applause showed that they had not understood that the symphony was finished.—And yet there were four pairs of hands went on clapping when the others had finished: but they awoke no echo, and stopped ashamed: that made the emptiness seem more empty, and the little incident served to show the audience how bored it had been.

Christophe took a seat in the middle of the orchestra: he dared not look to right or left. He wanted to cry: and

at the same time he was quivering with rage. He was fain to get up and shout at them: "You bore me! Ah! How you bore me! I cannot bear it! . . . Go away! Go away, all of you! . . ."

The papers published only a few lines about Christophe's compositions, and they all said almost the same things: ". . . Knowledge of counterpoint. Complicated writing. Lack of inspiration. No melody. Written with the head, not with the heart. Want of sincerity. Trying to be original. . . ." Followed a paragraph on true originality, that of the masters who are dead and buried, Mozart, Beethoven, Loewe, Schubert, Brahms, "those who are original without thinking of it."—Then by a natural transition they passed to the revival at the Grand Ducal Theater of the *Nachtlager von Granada* of Konradin Kreutzer: a long account was given of "the delicious music, as fresh and jolly as when it was first written."

Christophe's compositions met with absolute and astonished lack of comprehension from the most kindly disposed critics: veiled hostility from those who did not like him, and were arming themselves for later ventures: and from the general public, guided by neither friendly nor hostile critics, silence. Left to its own thoughts the general public does not think at all: that goes without saying.

Christophe was bowled over.

And yet there was nothing surprising in his defeat. There were reasons, three to one, why his compositions should not please. They were immature. They were, secondly, too advanced to be understood at once. And, lastly, people were only too glad to give a lesson to the impertinent youngster.—But Christophe was not cool-headed enough to admit that his reverse was legitimate. He had none of that serenity which the true artist gains from the mournful experience of long misunderstanding at the hands of men and their incurable stupidity. His naïve confidence in the public and in success which he thought he could easily gain because he deserved it, crumbled away. He would have thought it natural to have enemies. But what stag-

gered him was to find that he had not a single friend. Those on whom he had counted, those who hitherto had seemed to be interested in everything that he wrote, had not given him a single word of encouragement since the concert. He tried to probe them: they took refuge behind vague words. He insisted, he wanted to know what they really thought: the most sincere of them referred back to his former works, his foolish early efforts.—More than once in his life he was to hear his new works condemned by comparison with the older ones,—and that by the same people who, a few years before, had condemned his older works when they were new: that is the usual ordering of these things. Christophe did not like it: he exclaimed loudly. If people did not like him, well and good: he accepted that: it even pleased him since he could not be friends with everybody. But that people should pretend to be fond of him and not allow him to grow up, that they should try to force him all his life to remain a child, was beyond the pale! What is good at twelve is not good at twenty: and he hoped not to stay at that, but to change and to go on changing always. . . . These idiots who tried to stop life! . . . What was interesting in his childish compositions was not their childishness and silliness, but the force in them hungering for the future. And they were trying to kill his future! . . . No, they had never understood what he was, they had never loved him, never then or now: they only loved the weakness and vulgarity in him, everything that he had in common with others, and not *himself*, not what he really was: their friendship was a misunderstanding. . . .

He was exaggerating, perhaps. It often happens with quite nice people who are incapable of liking new work which they sincerely love when it is twenty years old. New life smacks too strong for their weak senses: the scent of it must evaporate in the winds of Time. A work of art only becomes intelligible to them when it is crusted over with the dust of years.

But Christophe could not admit of not being understood when he was *present*, and of being understood when he

was *past*. He preferred to think that he was not understood at all, in any case, even. And he raged against it. He was foolish enough to want to make himself understood, to explain himself, to argue. Although no good purpose was served thereby: he would have had to reform the taste of his time. But he was afraid of nothing. He was determined by hook or by crook to clean up German taste. But it was utterly impossible: he could not convince anybody by means of conversation, in which he found it difficult to find words, and expressed himself with an excess of violence about the great musicians and even about the men to whom he was talking: he only succeeded in making a few more enemies. He would have had to prepare his ideas beforehand, and then to force the public to hear him. . . .

And just then, at the appointed hour, his star—his evil star—gave him the means of doing so.

He was sitting in the restaurant of the theater in a group of musicians belonging to the orchestra whom he was scandalizing by his artistic judgments. They were not all of the same opinion: but they were all ruffled by the freedom of his language. Old Krause, the alto, a good fellow and a good musician, who sincerely loved Christophe, tried to turn the conversation: he coughed, then looked out for an opportunity of making a pun. But Christophe did not hear him: he went on: and Krause mourned and thought:

“What makes him say such things? God bless him! You can think these things: but you must not say them.”

The odd thing was that he also thought “these things”: at least, he had a glimmering of them, and Christophe’s words roused many doubts in him: but he had not the courage to confess it, or openly to agree—half from fear of compromising himself, half from modesty and distrust of himself.

Weigl, the cornet-player, did not want to know anything: he was ready to admire anything, or anybody, good or bad, star or gas-jet: everything was the same to him: there were no degrees in his admiration: he admired, admired, ad-

mired. It was a vital necessity to him: it hurt him when anybody tried to curb him.

Old Kuh, the violoncellist, suffered even more. He loved bad music with all his heart. Everything that Christophe hounded down with his sarcasm and invective was infinitely dear to him: instinctively his choice pitched on the most conventional works: his soul was a reservoir of tearful and high-flown emotion. Indeed, he was not dishonest in his tender regard for all the sham great men. It was when he tried to pretend that he liked the real great men that he was lying to himself—in perfect innocence. There are “Brahmins” who think to find in their God the breath of old men of genius: they love Beethoven in Brahms. Kuh went one better: he loved Brahms in Beethoven.

But the most enraged of all with Christophe’s paradoxes was Spitz, the bassoon. It was not so much his musical instinct that was wounded as his natural servility. One of the Roman Emperors wished to die standing. Spitz wished to die, as he had lived, crawling: that was his natural position: it was delightful to him to grovel at the feet of everything that was official, hallowed, “arrived”; and he was beside himself when anybody tried to keep him from playing the lackey, comfortably.

So, Kuh groaned, Weigl threw up his hands in despair, Krause made jokes, and Spitz shouted in a shrill voice. But Christophe went on imperturbably shouting louder than the rest: and saying monstrous things about Germany and the Germans.

At the next table a young man was listening to him and rocking with laughter. He had black curly hair, fine, intelligent eyes, a large nose, which at its end could not make up its mind to go either to right or left, and rather than go straight on, went to both sides at once, thick lips, and a clever, mobile face: he was following everything that Christophe said, hanging on his lips, reflecting every word with a sympathetic and yet mocking attention, wrinkling up his forehead, his temples, the corners of his eyes, round his nostrils and cheeks, grimacing with laughter, and every now and then shaking all over convulsively. He did not

join in the conversation, but he did not miss a word of it. He showed his joy especially when he saw Christophe, involved in some argument and heckled by Spitz, flounder about, stammer, and stutter with anger, until he had found the word he was seeking,—a rock with which to crush his adversary. And his delight knew no bounds when Christophe, swept along by his passions far beyond the capacity of his thought, enunciated monstrous paradoxes which made his hearers snort.

At last they broke up, each of them tired out with feeling and alleging his own superiority. As Christophe, the last to go, was leaving the room he was accosted by the young man who had listened to his words with such pleasure. He had not yet noticed him. The other politely removed his hat, smiled, and asked permission to introduce himself:

“Franz Mannheim.”

He begged pardon for his indiscretion in listening to the argument, and congratulated Christophe on the *maestria* with which he had pulverized his opponents. He was still laughing at the thought of it. Christophe was glad to hear it, and looked at him a little distrustfully:

“Seriously?” he asked. “You are not laughing at me?”

The other swore by the gods. Christophe’s face lit up.

“Then you think I am right? You are of my opinion?”

“Well,” said Mannheim, “I am not a musician. I know nothing of music. The only music I like—(if it is not too flattering to say so)—is yours. . . . That may show you that my taste is not so bad. . . .”

“Oh!” said Christophe skeptically, though he was flattered all the same, “that proves nothing.”

“You are difficult to please. . . . Good! . . . I think as you do: that proves nothing. And I don’t venture to judge what you say of German musicians. But, anyhow, it is so true of the Germans in general, the old Germans, all the romantic idiots with their rancid thought, their sloppy emotion, their senile reiteration which we are asked to admire, *‘the eternal Yesterday, which has always been, and*

always will be, and will be law to-morrow because it is law to-day.' . . . !"

He recited a few lines of the famous passage in Schiller:

*". . . Das ewig Gestrige,
Das immer war und immer wiederkehrt. . . ."*

"Himself, first of all!" He stopped in the middle of his recitation.

"Who?" asked Christophe.

"The pump-maker who wrote that!"

Christophe did not understand. But Mannheim went on:

"I should like to have a general cleaning up of art and thought every fifty years—nothing to be left standing."

"A little drastic," said Christophe, smiling.

"No, I assure you. Fifty years is too much: I should say thirty. . . . And even less! . . . It is a hygienic measure. One does not keep one's ancestors in one's house. One gets rid of them, when they are dead, and sends them elsewhere, there politely to rot, and one places stones on them to be quite sure that they will not come back. Nice people put flowers on them, too. I don't mind if they like it. All I ask is to be left in peace. I leave them alone! Each for his own side, say I; the dead and the living."

"There are some dead who are more alive than the living."

"No, no! It would be more true to say that there are some living who are more dead than the dead."

"Maybe. In any case, there are old things which are still young."

"Then if they are still young we can find them for ourselves. . . . But I don't believe it. What has been good once never is good again. Nothing is good but change. Before all we have to rid ourselves of the old men and things. There are too many of them in Germany. Death to them, say I!"

Christophe listened to these squibs attentively and labored to discuss them: he was in part in sympathy with

them, he recognized certain of his own thoughts in them: and at the same time he felt a little embarrassed at having them so blown out to the point of caricature. But as he assumed that everybody else was as serious as himself, he thought that perhaps Mannheim, who seemed to be more learned than himself and spoke more easily, was right, and was drawing the logical conclusions from his principles. Vain Christophe, whom so many people could not forgive for his faith in himself, was really most naïvely modest, often tricked by his modesty when he was with those who were better educated than himself,—especially when they consented not to plume themselves on it to avoid an awkward discussion. Mannheim, who was amusing himself with his own paradoxes, and from one sally to another had reached extravagant quips and cranks, at which he was laughing immensely, was not accustomed to being taken seriously: he was delighted with the trouble that Christophe was taking to discuss his nonsense, and even to understand it: and while he laughed, he was grateful for the importance which Christophe gave him: he thought him absurd and charming.

They parted very good friends: and Christophe was not a little surprised three hours later at rehearsal to see Mannheim's head poked through the little door leading to the orchestra, smiling and grimacing, and making mysterious signs at him. When the rehearsal was over Christophe went to him. Mannheim took his arm familiarly.

"You can spare a moment? . . . Listen. I have an idea. Perhaps you will think it absurd. . . . Would not you like for once in a way to write what you think of music and the musicos? Instead of wasting your breath in haranguing four dirty knaves of your band who are good for nothing but scraping and blowing into bits of wood, would it not be better to address the general public?"

"Not better? Would I like? . . . My word; And when do you want me to write? It is good of you! . . ."

"I've a proposal for you. . . . Some friends and I: Adalbert von Waldhaus, Raphael Goldenring, Adolf Mai, and Lucien Ehrenfeld,—have started a Review, the only intel-

ligent Review in the town: the *Dionysos*.—(You must know it. . . .)—We all admire each other and should be glad if you would join us. Will you take over our musical criticism?”

Christophe was abashed by such an honor: he was longing to accept: he was only afraid of not being worthy: he could not write.

“Oh! come,” said Mannheim, “I am sure you can. And besides, as soon as you are a critic you can do anything you like. You’ve no need to be afraid of the public. The public is incredibly stupid. It is nothing to be an artist: an artist is only a sort of comedian: an artist can be hissed. But a critic has the right to say: ‘Hiss me that man!’ The whole audience lets him do its thinking. Think whatever you like. Only look as if you were thinking something. Provided you give the fools their food, it does not much matter what, they will gulp down anything.”

In the end Christophe consented, with effusive thanks. He only made it a condition that he should be allowed to say what he liked.

“Of course, of course,” said Mannheim. “Absolute freedom! We are all free.”

He looked him up at the theater once more after the performance to introduce him to Adalbert von Waldhaus and his friends. They welcomed him warmly.

With the exception of Waldhaus, who belonged to one of the noble families of the neighborhood, they were all Jews and all very rich: Mannheim was the son of a banker: Mai the son of the manager of a metallurgical establishment: and Ehrenfeld’s father was a great jeweler. Their fathers belonged to the older generation of Jews, industrious and acquisitive, attached to the spirit of their race, building their fortunes with keen energy, and enjoying their energy much more than their fortunes. Their sons seemed to be made to destroy what their fathers had builded: they laughed at family prejudice and their ant-like mania for economy and delving: they posed as artists, affected to despise money and to fling it out of window. But in reality they hardly ever let it slip through their fingers:

and in vain did they do all sorts of foolish things: they never could altogether lead astray their lucidity of mind and practical sense. For the rest, their parents kept an eye on them, and reined them in.

Christophe was not happy in such a set. They were always talking of women and horses: and their talk was not refined. They were stiff and formal. Adalbert spoke in a mincing, slow voice, with exaggerated, bored, and boring politeness. Adolf Mai, the secretary of the Review, a heavy, thick-set, bull-necked, brutal-looking young man, always pretended to be in the right: he laid down the law, never listened to what anybody said, seemed to despise the opinion of the person he was talking to, and also that person. Goldenring, the art critic, who had a twitch, and eyes perpetually winking behind his large spectacles,—no doubt in imitation of the painters whose society he cultivated, wore long hair, smoked in silence, mumbled scraps of sentences which he never finished, and made vague gestures in the air with his thumb. Ehrenfeld was little, bald, and smiling, had a fair beard and a sensitive, weary-looking face, a hooked nose, and he wrote the fashions and the society notes in the Review. In a silky voice he used to talk obscurely: he had a wit, though of a malignant and often ignoble kind.—All these young millionaires were anarchists, of course: when a man possesses everything it is the supreme luxury for him to deny society: for in that way he can evade his responsibilities. So might a robber, who has just fleeced a traveler, say to him: "What are you staying for? Get along! I have no more use for you."

Of the whole bunch Christophe was only in sympathy with Mannheim: he was certainly the most lively of the five: he was amused by everything that he said and everything that was said to him: stuttering, stammering, blundering, sniggering, talking nonsense, he was incapable of following an argument, or of knowing exactly what he thought himself: but he was quite kindly, bearing no malice, having not a spark of ambition. In truth, he was not very frank: he was always playing a part: but quite innocently, and he never did anybody any harm.

For some time Christophe was one of his hobbies. Mannheim swore by him. He blew his trumpet everywhere. According to him Christophe was a genius, an extraordinary man, who made strange music and talked about it in an astonishing fashion, a witty man—and a handsome: fine lips, magnificent teeth. He added that Christophe admired him.

At first all went well with the Review. Christophe had not yet perceived the mediocrity of his colleagues: and, since he was one of them, they hailed him as a genius. Mannheim, who had discovered him, went everywhere repeating that Christophe was an admirable critic, though he had never read anything he had written, that he had mistaken his vocation, and that he, Mannheim, had revealed it to him. They advertised his articles in mysterious terms which roused curiosity: and his first effort was in fact like a stone falling into a duck-pond in the atony of the little town. It was called: *Too much music*.

"Too much music, too much drinking, too much eating," wrote Christophe. "Eating, drinking, hearing, without hunger, thirst, or need, from sheer habitual gormandizing. Living like Strasburg geese. These people are sick from a diseased appetite. It matters little what you give them: *Tristan* or the *Trompeter von Säckingen*, Beethoven or Mascagni, a fugue or a two-step, Adam, Bach, Puccini, Mozart, or Marschner: they do not know what they are eating: the great thing is to eat. They find no pleasure in it. Look at them at a concert. Talk of German gaiety! These people do not know what gaiety means: they are always gay! Their gaiety, like their sorrow, drops like rain: their joy is dust: there is neither life nor force in it. They would stay for hours smilingly and vaguely drinking in sounds, sounds, sounds. They think of nothing: they feel nothing: they are sponges. True joy, or true sorrow—strength—is not drawn out over hours like beer from a cask. They take you by the throat and have you down: after they are gone there is no desire left in a man to drink in anything: he is full! . . .

"Too much music! You are slaying each other and it. If

you choose to murder each other that is your affair: I can't help it. But where music is concerned,—hands off! I will not suffer you to debase the loveliness of the world by heaping up in the same basket things holy and things shameful, by giving, as you do at present, the prelude to *Parsifal* between a fantasia on the *Daughter of the Regiment* and a saxophone quartette, or an adagio of Beethoven between a cakewalk and the rubbish of Leoncavallo. You boast of being a musical people. You pretend to love music. What sort of music do you love? Good or bad? You applaud both equally. Well, then, choose! What exactly do you want? You do not know yourselves. You do not want to know: you are too fearful of taking sides and compromising yourselves. . . . To the devil with your prudence!—You are above party, do you say?—Above? You mean below. . . .

“Have courage and be true,” he went on. “Have courage and be ugly. If you like bad music, then say so frankly. Show yourselves, see yourselves as you are. Rid your souls of the loathsome burden of all your compromise and equivocation. Wash it in pure water. How long is it since you have seen yourselves in a mirror? I will show you yourselves. Composers, *virtuosi*, conductors, singers, and you, dear public. You shall for once know yourselves. . . . Be what you like: but, for any sake, be true! Be true even though art and artists—and I myself—have to suffer for it! If art and truth cannot live together, then let art disappear. Truth is life. Lies are death.”

Naturally, this youthful, wild outburst, which was all of a piece, and in very bad taste, produced an outcry. And yet, as everybody was attacked and nobody in particular, its pertinency was not recognized. Every one is, or believes himself to be, or says that he is the best friend of truth: there was therefore no danger of the conclusions of the article being attacked. Only people were shocked by its general tone: everybody agreed that it was hardly proper, especially from an artist in a semi-official position. A few musicians began to be uneasy and protested bitterly: they saw that Christophe would not stop at that. Others thought

themselves more clever and congratulated Christophe on his courage: they were no less uneasy about his next articles.

Both tactics produced the same result. Christophe had plunged: nothing could stop him: and as he had promised, everybody was passed in survey, composers and interpreters alike.

If he had only stopped at that!—But, whirled along by his enthusiasm, he plunged like a cannon ball into the sanctuary, the tabernacle, the inviolable refuge of mediocrity: Criticism. He bombarded his colleagues.

All the critics felt the affront. Up to that time they had stood aside from the conflict. They did not care to risk a rebuff: they knew Christophe, they knew his efficiency, and they knew also that he was not long-suffering. Certain of them had discreetly expressed their regret that so gifted a composer should dabble in a profession not his own. Whatever might be their opinion (when they had one), and however hurt they might be by Christophe, they respected in him their own privilege of being able to criticise everything without being criticised themselves. But when they saw Christophe rudely break the tacit convention which bound them, they saw in him an enemy of public order. With one consent it seemed revolting to them that a very young man should take upon himself to show scant respect for the national glories: and they began a furious campaign against him. They did not write long articles or consecutive arguments—(they were unwilling to venture upon such ground with an adversary better armed than themselves: although a journalist has the special faculty of being able to discuss without taking his adversary's arguments into consideration, and even without having read them)—but long experience had taught them that, as the reader of a paper always agrees with it, even to appear to argue was to weaken its credit with him: it was necessary to affirm, or better still, to deny—(negation is twice as powerful as affirmation: it is a direct consequence of the law of gravity: it is much easier to drop a stone than to throw it up).—They adopted, therefore, a system of little notes,

perfidious, ironic, injurious, which were repeated day by day, in an easily accessible position, with unwearying assiduity. They held the insolent Christophe up to ridicule, though they never mentioned him by name, but always transparently alluded to him. They twisted his words to make them look absurd: they told anecdotes about him, true for the most part, though the rest were a tissue of lies, nicely calculated to set him at loggerheads with the whole town, and, worse still, with the Court: even his physical appearance, his features, his manner of dressing, were attacked and caricatured in a way that by dint of repetition came to be like him.

II ENGULFED

Christophe had got so far with his clumsy efforts towards the reform of German art when there happened to pass through the town a troupe of French actors. It would be more exact to say, a band; for, as usual, they were a collection of poor devils, picked up goodness knows where, and young unknown players too happy to learn their art, provided they were allowed to act. They were all harnessed to the chariot of a famous and elderly actress who was making tour of Germany, and passing through the little princely town, gave their performances there.

One of the productions announced was a French translation of *Hamlet*. Christophe had never missed an opportunity of seeing a play of Shakespeare's. Shakespeare was to him of the same order as Beethoven, an inexhaustible spring of life. *Hamlet* had been specially dear to him during the period of stress and tumultuous doubts through which he had just passed. In spite of his fear of seeing himself reflected in that magic mirror he was fascinated by it: and he prowled about the theater notices, though he did not admit that he was longing to book a seat. Chance brought him in contact with Mannheim just as he was sadly going home.

Mannheim took his arm and told him angrily, though he never ceased his banter, that an old beast of a relation, his

father's sister, had just come down upon them with all her retinue and that they had all to stay at home to welcome her. He had time to get out of it: but his father would brook no trifling questions of family etiquette and the respect due to elderly relatives: and as he had to handle his father carefully because he wanted presently to get money out of him, he had had to give in and not go to the play.

"You had tickets?" asked Christophe.

"An excellent box: and I have to go and give it—(I am just going now)—to that old pig, Grünebaum, papa's partner, so that he can swagger there with the she Grünebaum and their turkey hen of a daughter. Jolly! . . . I want to find something very disagreeable to say to them. They won't mind so long as I give them the tickets—although they would much rather they were banknotes."

He stopped short with his mouth open and looked at Christophe:

"Oh! but—but just the man I want!" He chuckled:

"Christophe, are you going to the theater?"

"No."

"Good. You shall go. I ask it as a favor. You cannot refuse."

Christophe did not understand.

"But I have no seat."

"Here you are!" said Mannheim triumphantly, thrusting the ticket into his hand.

"You are mad," said Christophe. "What about your father's orders?"

Mannheim laughed:

"He will be furious!" he said.

He dried his eyes and went on:

"I shall tap him to-morrow morning as soon as he is up before he knows anything."

"I cannot accept," said Christophe, "knowing that he would not like it."

"It does not concern you: you know nothing about it."

Christophe had unfolded the ticket:

"And what would I do with a box for four?"

"Whatever you like. You can sleep in it, dance if you like.

Take some women. You must know some? If need be we can lend you some."

Christophe held out the ticket to Mannheim:

"Certainly not. Take it back."

"Not I," said Mannheim, stepping back a pace. "I can't force you to go if it bores you, but I shan't take it back. You can throw it in the fire or even take it virtuously to the Grünebaums. I don't care. Good-night!"

He left Christophe in the middle of the street, ticket in hand, and went away.

Christophe was unhappy about it. He said to himself that he ought to take it to the Grünebaums: but he was not keen about the idea. He went home still pondering, and when later he looked at the clock he saw that he had only just time enough to dress for the theater. It would be too silly to waste the ticket. He asked his mother to go with him. But Louisa declared that she would rather go to bed. He went. At heart he was filled with childish glee at the thought of his evening. Only one thing worried him: the thought of having to be alone in such a pleasure. He had no remorse about Mannheim's father or the Grünebaums, whose box he was taking: but he was remorseful about those whom he might have taken with him. He thought of the joy it could give to other young people like himself: and it hurt him not to be able to give it them. He cast about but could find nobody to whom he could offer his ticket. Besides, it was late and he must hurry.

As he entered the theater he passed by the closed window on which a poster announced that there was not a single seat left in the office. Among the people who were turning away from it disappointedly he noticed a girl who could not make up her mind to leave and was enviously watching the people going in. She was dressed very simply in black; she was not very tall; her face was thin and she looked delicate; and at the moment he did not notice whether she were pretty or plain. He passed her: then he stopped, turned, and without stopping to think:

"You can't get a seat, Fräulein?" he asked point-blank.

She blushed and said with a foreign accent:

"No, sir."

"I have a box which I don't know what to do with. Will you make use of it with me?"

She blushed again and thanked him and said she could not accept. Christophe was embarrassed by her refusal, begged her pardon and tried to insist, but he could not persuade her, although it was obvious that she was dying to accept. He was very perplexed. He made up his mind suddenly.

"There is a way out of the difficulty," he said. "You take the ticket. I don't want it. I have seen the play." (He was boasting). "It will give you more pleasure than me. Take it, please."

The girl was so touched by his proposal and the cordial manner in which it was made that tears all but came to her eyes. She murmured gratefully that she could not think of depriving him of it.

"Then, come," he said, smiling.

He looked so kind and honest that she was ashamed of having refused, and she said in some confusion:

"Thank you. I will come."

They went in. The Mannheims' box was wide, big, and faced the stage: it was impossible not to be seen in it if they had wished. It is useless to say that their entry passed unnoticed. Christophe made the girl sit at the front, while he stayed a little behind so as not to embarrass her. She sat stiffly upright, not daring to turn her head: she was horribly shy: she would have given much not to have accepted. To give her time to recover her composure and not knowing what to talk to her about, Christophe pretended to look the other way. Whichever way he looked it was easily seen that his presence with an unknown companion among the brilliant people of the boxes was exciting much curiosity and comment. He darted furious glances at those who were looking at him: he was angry that people should go on being interested in him when he took no interest in them. It did not occur to him that their indiscreet curiosity was more busied with his companion than with himself and

that there was more offense in it. By way of showing his utter indifference to anything they might say or think he leaned towards the girl and began to talk to her. She looked so scared by his talking and so unhappy at having to reply, and it seemed to be so difficult for her to wrench out a "Yes" or a "No" without ever daring to look at him, that he took pity on her shyness, and drew back to a corner. Fortunately the play began.

Christophe had not seen the play bill and he hardly cared to know what part the great actress was playing: he was one of those simple people who go to the theater to see the play and not the actors. He had never wondered whether the famous player would be Ophelia or the Queen; if he had wondered about it he would have inclined towards the Queen, bearing in mind the ages of the two ladies. But it could never have occurred to him that she would play Hamlet. When he saw Hamlet, and heard his mechanical dolly squeak, it was some time before he could believe it; he wondered if he were not dreaming.

"But who? Who is it?" he asked half aloud. "It can't be . . ."

And when he had to accept that it *was* Hamlet, he rapped out an oath, which fortunately his companion did not hear, because she was a foreigner, though it was heard perfectly in the next box: for he was at once indignantly bidden to be silent. He withdrew to the back of the box to swear his fill. He could not recover his temper. Christophe was so exasperated that he wanted to go away. He turned his back on the scene, and he made hideous faces against the wall of the box like a child put in the corner. Fortunately his companion dared not look at him: for if she had seen him she would have thought him mad.

Suddenly Christophe stopped making faces. He stopped still and made no sound. A lovely musical voice, a young woman's voice, grave and sweet, was heard. Christophe pricked his ears. As she went on with her words he turned again, keenly interested to see what bird could warble so. He saw Ophelia. In truth she was nothing like the Ophelia of Shakespeare. She was a beautiful girl, tall, big and fine

like a young fresh statue—Electra or Cassandra. She was brimming with life. In spite of her efforts to keep within her part, the force of youth and joy that was in her shone forth from her body, her movements, her gestures, her brown eyes that laughed in spite of herself. Such is the power of physical beauty that Christophe who a moment before had been merciless in judging the interpretation of Hamlet never for a moment thought of regretting that Ophelia was hardly at all like his image of her: and he sacrificed his image to the present vision of her remorselessly. With the unconscious faithlessness of people of passion he even found a profound truth in the youthful ardor brimming in the depths of the chaste and unhappy virgin heart. But the magic of the voice, pure, warm, and velvety, worked the spell: every word sounded like a lovely chord: about every syllable there hovered like the scent of thyme or wild mint the laughing accent of the Midi with its full rhythm. Strange was this vision of an Ophelia from Arles! In it was something of that golden sun and its wild north-west wind, its *mistral*.

Christophe forgot his companion and came and sat by her side at the front of the box: he never took his eyes off the beautiful actress whose name he did not know. But the audience who had not come to see an unknown player paid no attention to her, and only applauded when the female Hamlet spoke. That made Christophe growl and call them: "Idiots!" in a low voice which could be heard ten yards away.

It was not until the curtain was lowered upon the first act that he remembered the existence of his companion, and seeing that she was still shy he thought with a smile of how he must have scared her with his extravagances. He was not far wrong: the girl whom chance had thrown in his company for a few hours was almost morbidly shy; she must have been in an abnormal state of excitement to have accepted Christophe's invitation. She had hardly accepted it than she had wished at any cost to get out of it, to make some excuse and to escape. It had been much worse for her when she had seen that she was an object of general

curiosity, and her unhappiness had been increased almost past endurance when she heard behind her back—(she dared not turn round)—her companion's low growls and imprecations. She expected anything now, and when he came and sat by her she was frozen with terror: what eccentricity would he commit next? She would gladly have sunk into the ground fathoms down. She drew back instinctively; she was afraid of touching him.

But all her fears vanished when the interval came and she heard him say quite kindly:

"I am an unpleasant companion, eh? I beg your pardon."

Then she looked at him and saw his kind smile which had induced her to come with him.

He went on:

"I cannot hide what I think. . . . But you know it is too much! . . . That woman, that old woman! . . ."

He made a face of disgust.

She smiled and said in a low voice:

"It is fine in spite of everything."

He noticed her accent and asked:

"You are a foreigner?"

"Yes," said she.

He looked at her modest gown.

"A governess?" he said.

"Yes."

"What nationality?"

She said:

"I am French."

He made a gesture of surprise:

"French? I should not have thought it."

"Why?" she asked timidly.

"You are so . . . serious!" said he.

(She thought it was not altogether a compliment from him.)

"There are serious people also in France," said she confusedly.

He looked at her honest little face, with its broad forehead, little straight nose, delicate chin, and thin cheeks framed in her chestnut hair. It was not she that he saw; he

was thinking of the beautiful actress. He repeated:

"It is strange that you should be French! . . . Are you really of the same nationality as Ophelia? One would never think it."

After a moment's silence he went on:

"How beautiful she is!" without noticing that he seemed to be making a comparison between the actress and his companion that was not at all flattering to her. But she felt it: but she did not mind: for she was of the same opinion. He tried to find out about the actress from her: but she knew nothing: it was plain that she did not know much about the theater.

"You must be glad to hear French?" he asked. He meant it in jest, but he touched her.

"Ah!" she said with an accent of sincerity which struck him, "it does me so much good! I am stifled here."

He looked at her more closely: she clasped her hands, and seemed to be oppressed. But at once she thought of how her words might hurt him:

"Forgive me," she said. "I don't know what I am saying."

He laughed:

"Don't beg pardon! You are quite right. You don't need to be French to be stifled here. Ouf!"

He threw back his shoulders and took a long breath.

But she was ashamed of having been so free and relapsed into silence. Besides she had just seen that the people in the boxes next to them were listening to what they were saying: he noticed it too and was wrathful. They broke off: and until the end of the interval he went out into the corridor. The girl's words were ringing in his ears, but he was lost in dreams: the image of Ophelia filled his thoughts. During the succeeding acts she took hold of him completely, and when the beautiful actress came to the mad scene and the melancholy songs of love and death, her voice gave forth notes so moving that he was bowled over: he felt that he was going to burst into tears. Angry with himself for what he took to be a sign of weakness—(for he would not admit that a true artist can weep)—and not wishing to

make an object of himself, he left the box abruptly. The corridors and the foyer were empty. In his agitation he went down the stairs of the theater and went out without knowing it. He had to breathe the cold night air, and to go striding through the dark, half-empty streets. He came to himself by the edge of a canal, and leaned on the parapet of the bank and watched the silent water whereon the reflections of the street lamps danced in the darkness. His soul was like that: it was dark and heaving; he could see nothing in it but great joy dancing on the surface. The clocks rang the hour. It was impossible for him to go back to the theater and hear the end of the play. To see the triumph of Fortinbras? No, that did not tempt him. A fine triumph that! Who thinks of envying the conqueror? Who would be he after being gorged with all the wild and absurd savagery of life? The whole play is a formidable indictment of life. But there is such a power of life in it that sadness becomes joy, and bitterness intoxicates. . . .

Christophe went home without a thought for the unknown girl, whose name even he had not ascertained.

Next morning he went to see the actress at the little third-rate hotel in which the impresario had quartered her with her comrades while the great actress had put up at the best hotel in the town. He was conducted to a very untidy room where the remains of breakfast were left on an open piano, together with hairpins and torn and dirty sheets of music. In the next room Ophelia was singing at the top of her voice, like a child, for the pleasure of making a noise. She stopped for a moment when her visitor was announced to ask merrily in a loud voice without ever caring whether she were heard through the wall:

"What does he want? What is his name? Christophe? Christophe what? Christophe Krafft? What a name!"

(She repeated it two or three times, rolling her *r*'s terribly.)

"It is like a swear—"

(She swore.)

"Is he young or old? Pleasant? Very well. I'll come."

She began to sing again:

"Nothing is sweeter than my love . . ." while she rushed about her room cursing a tortoise-shell pin which had got lost in all the rubbish. She lost patience, began to grumble, and roared. Although he could not see her Christophe followed all her movements on the other side of the wall in imagination and laughed to himself. At last he heard steps approaching, the door was flung open, and Ophelia appeared.

She was half dressed, in a loose gown which she was holding about her waist: her bare arms showed in her wide sleeves: her hair was carelessly done, and locks of it fell down into her eyes and over her cheeks. Her fine brown eyes smiled, her lips smiled, her cheeks smiled, and a charming dimple in her chin smiled. In her beautiful grave melodious voice she asked him to excuse her appearance. She knew that there was nothing to excuse and that he could only be very grateful to her for it. She thought he was a journalist come to interview her. Instead of being annoyed when he told her that he had come to her entirely of his own accord and because he admired her, she was delighted. She was a good girl, affectionate, delighted to please, and making no effort to conceal her delight. Christophe's visit and his enthusiasm made her very happy—(she was not yet spoiled by flattery). She was so natural in all her movements and ways, even in her little vanities and her naïve delight in giving pleasure, that he was not embarrassed for a single moment. They became old friends at once. He could jabber a few words of French: and she could jabber a few words of German: after an hour they told each other all their secrets. She never thought of sending him away. The splendid gay southern creature, intelligent and warm-hearted, who would have been bored to tears with her stupid companions and in a country whose language she did not know, a country without the natural joy that was in herself, was glad to find some one to talk to. As for Christophe it was an untold blessing for him to meet the free-hearted girl of the Midi filled with the life of the people, in the midst of his narrow and insincere fellow citizens. He did not yet know the work-

ings of such natures which, unlike the Germans, have no more in their minds and hearts than they show, and often not even as much. But at the least she was young, she was alive, she said frankly, rawly, what she thought: she judged everything freely from a new and a fresh point of view: in her it was possible to breathe a little of the northwest wind that sweeps away mists. She was gifted. Uneducated and unthinking, she could at once feel with her whole heart and be sincerely moved by things which were beautiful and good; and then, a moment later, she would burst out laughing. She was a coquette and made eyes; she did not mind showing her bare arms and neck under her half open gown; she would have liked to turn Christophe's head, but it was all purely instinctive. There was no thought of gaining her own ends in her, and she much preferred to laugh, and talk blithely, to be a good fellow, a good chum, without ceremony or awkwardness. She told him about the underworld of the theater, her little sorrows, the silly susceptibilities of her comrades, the bickerings of Jezebel—who she called the great actress—who took good care not to let her shine. He confided his sufferings at the hands of the Germans: she clapped her hands and played chords to him. She was kind and would not speak ill of anybody; but that did not keep her from doing so, and while she blamed herself for her malice, when she laughed at anybody, she had a fund of mocking humor and that realistic and witty gift of observation which belongs to the people of the South; she could not resist it and drew cuttingly satirical portraits. With her pale lips she laughed merrily to show her teeth, like those of a puppy, and dark eyes shone in her pale face, which was a little discolored by grease paint.

They noticed suddenly that they had been talking for more than an hour. Christophe proposed to come for Corinne—that was her stage name—in the afternoon and show her over the town. She was delighted with the idea, and they arranged to meet immediately after dinner.

At the appointed hour, he turned up. Corinne was sitting in the little drawing-room of the hotel, with a book in her hand, which she was reading aloud. She greeted him with

smiling eyes but did not stop reading until she had finished her sentence. Then she signed to him to sit down on the sofa by her side:

"Sit there," she said, "and don't talk. I am going over my part. I shall have finished in a quarter of an hour."

She followed the script with her finger nail and read very quickly and carelessly like a little girl in a hurry. He offered to hear her her words. She passed him the book and got up to repeat what she had learned. She floundered and would repeat the end of one sentence four times before going on to the next. She shook her head as she recited her part; her hairpins fell down and all over the room. When she could not recollect sometimes some word she was as impatient as a naughty child; sometimes she swore comically or she would use big words—one word with which she apostrophized herself was very big and very short. Christophe was astonished by the mixture of talent and childishness in her. She would produce moving tones of voice quite aptly, but in the middle of a speech into which she seemed to be throwing her whole heart she would say a whole string of words that had absolutely no meaning. She recited her lesson like a parrot, without troubling about its meaning, and then she produced burlesque nonsense. She did not worry about it. When she saw it she would shout with laughter. At last she said: "Zut!", snatched the book from him, flung it into a corner of the room, and said:

"Holidays! The hour has struck! . . . Now let us go out."

He was a little anxious about her part and asked:

"You think you will know it?"

She replied confidently:

"Certainly. What is the prompter for?" She went into her room to put on her hat. Christophe sat at the piano while he was waiting for her and struck a few chords. From the next room she called:

"Oh! What is that? Play some more! How pretty it is!"

She ran in, pinning on her hat. He went on. When he had finished she wanted him to play more. She went into ecstasies with all the little arch exclamations habitual to Frenchwomen which they make about *Tristan* and a cup of choco-

late equally. It made Christophe laugh; it was a change from the tremendous affected, clumsy exclamations of the Germans; they were both exaggerated in different directions; one made a mountain out of a mole-hill, the other made a mole-hill out of a mountain; the French was not less ridiculous than the German, but for the moment it seemed more pleasant because he loved the lips from which it came. Corinne wanted to know what he was playing, and when she learned that he had composed it she gave a shout. He had told her during their conversation in the morning that he was a composer, but she had hardly listened to him. She sat by him and insisted on his playing everything that he had composed. Their walk was forgotten. It was not mere politeness on her part; she adored music and had an admirable instinct for it which supplied the deficiencies of her education. At first he did not take her seriously and played his easiest melodies. But when he had played a passage by which he set more store and saw that she preferred it too, although he had not said anything about it, he was joyfully surprised. With the naïve astonishment of the Germans when they meet a Frenchman who is a good musician he said:

"Odd. How good your taste is! I should never have thought it . . ."

Corinne laughed in his face.

He amused himself then by selecting compositions more and more difficult to understand, to see how far she would go with him. But she did not seem to be put out by his boldness, and after a particularly new melody which Christophe himself had almost come to doubt because he had never succeeded in having it accepted in Germany, he was greatly astonished when Corinne begged him to play it again, and she got up and began to sing the notes from memory almost without a mistake! He turned towards her and took her hands warmly:

"But you are a musician!" he cried.

She began to laugh and explained that she had made her début as a singer in provincial opera houses, but that an impresario of touring companies had recognized her dispo-

sition towards the poetic theater and had enrolled her in its services. He exclaimed:

"What a pity!"

"Why?" said she. "Poetry also is a sort of music."

She made him explain to her the meaning of his *Lieder*; he told her the German words, and she repeated them with easy mimicry, copying even the movements of his lips and eyes as he pronounced the words. When she had these to sing from memory, then she made grotesque mistakes, and when she forgot, she invented words, guttural and barbarously sonorous, which made them both laugh. She did not tire of making him play, nor he of playing for her and hearing her pretty voice; she did not know the tricks of the trade and sang a little from the throat like little girls, and there was a curious fragile quality in her voice that was very touching. She told him frankly what she thought. Although she could not explain why she liked or disliked anything there was always some grain of sense hidden in her judgment. The odd thing was that she found least pleasure in the most classical passages which were most appreciated in Germany; she paid him a few compliments out of politeness; but they obviously meant nothing. As she had no musical culture she had not the pleasure which amateurs and even artists find in what is *already heard*, a pleasure which often makes them unconsciously reproduce, or, in a new composition, like forms or formulæ which they have already used in old compositions. Nor did she have the German taste for melodious sentimentality (or, at least, her sentimentality was different; Christophe did not yet know its failings)—she did not go into ecstasies over the soft insipid music preferred in Germany; she did not single out the most melodious of his *Lieder*,—a melody which he would have liked to destroy because his friends, only too glad to be able to compliment him on something, were always talking about it. Corinne's dramatic instinct made her prefer the melodies which frankly reproduced a certain passion; he also set most store by them. And yet she did not hesitate to show her lack of sympathy with certain rude harmonies which seemed quite natural to Christophe; they

gave her a sort of shock when she came upon them; she would stop then and ask "if it was really so." When he said "Yes," then she would rush at the difficulty; but she would make a little grimace which did not escape Christophe. Sometimes even she would prefer to skip the bar. Then he would play it again on the piano.

"You don't like that?" he would ask.

She would screw up her nose.

"It is wrong," she would say.

"Not at all," he would reply with a laugh. "It is quite right. Think of its meaning. It is rhythmic, isn't it?"

(He pointed to her heart.)

But she would shake her head:

"May be; but it is wrong here." (She pulled her ear.)

And she would be a little shocked by the sudden outbursts of German declamation.

"Why should he talk so loud?" she would ask. "He is all alone. Aren't you afraid of his neighbors overhearing him? It is as though—(Forgive me! You won't be angry?)—he were hailing a boat."

He was not angry; he laughed heartily, he recognized that there was some truth in what she said. Her remarks amused him; nobody had ever said such things before. They agreed that declamation in singing generally deforms the natural word like a magnifying glass. Corinne asked Christophe to write music for a piece in which she would speak to the accompaniment of the orchestra, singing a few sentences every now and then. He was fired by the idea in spite of the difficulties of the stage setting which, he thought, Corinne's musical voice would easily overcome, and they made plans for the future. It was not far short of five o'clock when they thought of going out. Night fell early. They could not think of going for a walk. Corinne had a rehearsal at the theater in the evening; nobody was allowed to be present.

She made him promise to write a play for her, a melodrama, which could be translated into French and played in Paris by her. She was going away next day with her company. He promised to go and see her again the day

after at Frankfort, where they were giving a performance.

He could not see her off next day, because he was occupied by a rehearsal. But on the day following he managed to go to Frankfort as he had promised. It was a few hours' journey by rail. Corinne hardly believed Christophe's promise. But he had taken it seriously, and when the performance began he was there. When he knocked at her dressing-room door during the interval, she gave a cry of glad surprise and threw her arms round his neck with her usual exuberance. She was sincerely grateful to him for having come.

He took the last train home. At a station the train coming from the opposite direction was waiting. In the carriage opposite his—a third-class compartment—Christophe saw the young Frenchwoman who had been with him to the performance of *Hamlet*. She saw Christophe and recognized him. They were both astonished. They bowed and did not move, and dared not look again. And yet he had seen at once that she was wearing a little traveling toque and had an old valise by her side. It did not occur to him that she was leaving the country. He thought she must be going away for a few days. He did not know whether he ought to speak to her. He stopped, turned over in his mind what to say, and was just about to lower the window of the carriage to address a few words to her, when the signal was given. He gave up the idea. A few seconds passed before the train moved. They looked straight at each other. Each was alone, and their faces were pressed against the windows and they looked into each other's eyes through the night. They were separated by two windows. If they had reached out their hands they could have touched each other. So near. So far. The carriages shook heavily. She was still looking at him, shy no longer, now that they were parting. They were so absorbed in looking at each other that they never even thought of bowing for the last time. She was slowly borne away. He saw her disappear, and the train which bore her plunged into the night. Like two circling worlds, they had passed close to each other in infinite space, and now they sped apart perhaps for eternity.

When she had disappeared he felt the emptiness that her strange eyes had left in him, and he did not understand why; but the emptiness was there. Sleepy, with eyes half-closed, lying in a corner of the carriage, he felt her eyes looking into his, and all other thoughts ceased, to let him feel them more keenly. The image of Corinne fluttered outside his heart like an insect breaking its wings against a window; but he did not let it in.

He found it again when he got out of the train on his arrival, when the keen night air and his walk through the streets of the sleeping town had shaken off his drowsiness. He scowled at the thought of the pretty actress, with a mixture of pleasure and irritation, according as he recalled her affectionate ways or her vulgar coqueties.

"Oh! these French people," he growled, laughing softly, while he was undressing quietly, so as not to waken his mother, who was asleep in the next room.

A remark that he had heard the other evening in the box occurred to him:

"There are others also."

At his first encounter with France she laid before him the enigma of her double nature. But, like all Germans, he did not trouble to solve it, and as he thought of the girl in the train he said quietly:

"She does not look like a Frenchwoman."

As if a German could say what is French and what is not.

French or not, she filled his thoughts; for he woke in the middle of the night with a pang: he had just remembered the valise on the seat by the girl's side; and suddenly the idea that she had gone forever crossed his mind. The idea must have come to him at the time, but he had not thought of it. It filled him with a strange sadness. He shrugged his shoulders.

"What does it matter to me?" he said. "It is not my affair."

He went to sleep.

But next day the first person he met when he went out was Mannheim, who called him "Blücher," and asked him if he had made up his mind to conquer all France. From the garrulous news monger he learned that the story of the box had had a success exceeding all Mannheim's expectations.

"Thanks to you! Thanks to you!" cried Mannheim. "You are a great man. I am nothing compared with you."

"What have I done?" said Christophe.

"You are wonderful!" Mannheim replied. "I am jealous of you. To shut the box in the Grünebaums' faces, and then to ask the French governess instead of them—no, that takes the cake! I should never have thought of that!"

"She was the Grünebaums' governess?" said Christophe in amazement.

"Yes. Pretend you don't know, pretend to be innocent. You'd better! . . . My father is beside himself. The Grünebaums are in a rage! . . . It was not for long: they have sacked the girl."

"What!" cried Christophe. "They have dismissed her? Dismissed her because of me?"

"Didn't you know?" said Mannheim. "Didn't she tell you?"

Christophe was in despair.

"You mustn't be angry, old man," said Mannheim. "It does not matter. Besides, one had only to expect that the Grünebaums would find out . . ."

"What?" cried Christophe. "Find out what?"

"That she was your mistress, of course!"

"But I do not even know her. I don't know who she is."

Mannheim smiled, as if to say:

"You take me for a fool."

Christophe lost his temper and bade Mannheim do him the honor of believing what he said. Mannheim said:

"Then it is even more humorous."

Christophe worried about it, and talked of going to the Grünebaums and telling them the facts and justifying the girl. Mannheim dissuaded him.

"My dear fellow," he said, "anything you may say will only convince them of the contrary. Besides, it is too late. The girl has gone away."

Christophe was utterly sick at heart and tried to trace the young Frenchwoman. He wanted to write to her to beg her pardon. But nothing was known of her. He applied to the Grünebaums, but they snubbed him. They did not know themselves where she had gone, and they did not care. He learned only that her name was Antoinette Jeannin. The idea of the harm he had done in trying to do good tortured Christophe: he was remorseful. But added to his remorse was a mysterious attraction, which shone upon him from the eyes of the woman who was gone. Attraction and remorse both seemed to be blotted out, engulfed in the flood of the day's new thoughts. But they endured in the depths of his heart. Christophe did not forget the woman whom he called his victim. He had sworn to meet her again. He knew how small were the chances of his ever seeing her again: and he was sure that he would see her again.

As for Corinne, she never answered his letters. But three months later, when he had given up expecting to hear from her, he received a telegram of forty words of utter nonsense, in which she addressed him in little familiar terms, and asked "if they were still fond of each other." Then, after nearly a year's silence, there came a scrappy letter scrawled in her enormous childish zigzag writing, in which she tried to play the lady,—a few affectionate, droll words. And there she left it. She did not forget him, but she had no time to think of him.

Christophe went on with his fierce campaign in Waldhaus's Review. It was not that it gave him pleasure: criticism disgusted him, and he was always wishing it at the bottom of the sea. But he stuck to it because people were trying to stop him: he did not wish to appear to have given in.

Waldhaus was beginning to be uneasy. As long as he was out of reach he had looked on at the affray with the calmness of an Olympian god. But for some weeks past the other

papers had seemed to be beginning to disregard his inviolability: they had begun to attack his vanity as a writer with a rare malevolence in which, had Waldhaus been more subtle, he might have recognized the hand of a friend. As a matter of fact, the attacks were cunningly instigated by Ehrenfeld and Goldenring: they could see no other way of inducing him to stop Christophe's polemics. Their perception was justified. Waldhaus at once declared that Christophe was beginning to weary him: and he withdrew his support. All the staff of the Review then tried hard to silence Christophe! But it were as easy to muzzle a dog who is about to devour his prey! Everything they said to him only excited him more. He called them poltroons and declared that he would say everything—everything that he ought to say. If they wished to get rid of him, they were free to do so! The whole town would know that they were as cowardly as the rest: but he would not go of his own accord.

Mannheim only of the staff of the Review was not angry with Christophe. He had had his fill of entertainment out of him: it did not seem to him a heavy price to pay for his pound of flesh, to suffer a few violent words. It had been a good joke. If he had been the butt of it he would have been the first to laugh. And so he was quite ready to shake hands with Christophe as though nothing had happened. But Christophe was more rancorous and rejected all advances. Mannheim did not care. Christophe was a toy from which he had extracted all the amusement possible. He was beginning to want a new puppet. From that very day all was over between them. But that did not prevent Mannheim still saying, whenever Christophe was mentioned in his presence, that they were intimate friends. And perhaps he thought they were.

Two days after the quarrel he wrote an article in which he did not spare certain of his former associates in the Review. The two papers to which he took it returned it with ironically polite excuses for being unable to publish it. Christophe stuck to his guns. He remembered that the socialist paper in the town had made advances to him. He

knew one of the editors. They used to meet and talk occasionally. Christophe was glad to find some one who would talk freely about power, the army and oppression and archaic prejudices. But they could not go far with each other, for the socialist always came back to Karl Marx, about whom Christophe cared not a rap. Moreover, Christophe used to find in his speeches about the free man—besides a materialism which was not much to his taste—a pedantic severity and a despotism of thought, a secret cult of force, an inverse militarism, all of which did not sound very different from what he heard every day in German.

However, he thought of this man and his paper when he saw all other doors in journalism closed to him. He knew that his doing so would cause a scandal. The paper was violent, malignant, and always being condemned. But as Christophe never read it, he only thought of the boldness of its ideas, of which he was not afraid, and not of the baseness of its tone, which would have repelled him. Besides, he was so angry at seeing the other papers in alliance to suppress him that perhaps he would have gone on even if he had been warned. He wanted to show people that he was not so easily got rid of. So he took his article to the socialist paper, which received it with open arms. The next day the article appeared, and the paper announced in large letters that it had engaged the support of the young and talented maestro, Jean-Christophe Krafft, whose keen sympathy with the demands of the working classes was well known.

Christophe read neither the note nor the article, for he had gone out before dawn for a walk in the country, it being Sunday. He was in fine fettle. As he saw the sun rise he shouted, laughed, yodeled, leaped, and danced. No more Review, no more criticisms to do! It was spring and there was once more the music of the heavens and the earth, the most beautiful of all. No more dark concert rooms, stuffy and smelly, unpleasant people, dull performers. Now the marvelous song of the murmuring forests was to be heard, and over the fields like waves there passed the intoxicating scents of life, breaking through the crust of the earth and issuing from the grave.

He went home with his head buzzing with light and music, and his mother gave him a letter which had been brought from the Palace while he was away. The letter was in an impersonal form, and told Herr Krafft that he was to go to the Palace that morning. The morning was past, it was nearly one o'clock. Christophe was not put about.

"It is too late now," he said. "It will do to-morrow."

But his mother said anxiously:

"No, no. You cannot put off an appointment with His Highness like that: you must go at once. Perhaps it is a matter of importance."

Christophe shrugged his shoulders.

"Important! As if those people could have anything important to say! . . . He wants to tell me his ideas about music. That will be funny! . . . If only he has not taken it into his head to rival Siegfried Meyer* and wants to show me a *Hymn to Aegis*! I vow that I will not spare him. I shall say: 'Stick to politics. You are master there. You will always be right. But beware of art! In art you are seen without your plumes, your helmet, your uniform, your money, your titles, your ancestors, your policemen—and just think for a moment what will be left of you then!'"

Poor Louisa took him quite seriously and raised her hands in horror.

"You won't say that! . . . You are mad! Mad!"

It amused him to make her uneasy by playing upon her credulity until he became so extravagant that Louisa began to see that he was making fun of her.

"You are stupid, my boy!"

He laughed and kissed her. He was in a wonderfully good humor. On his walk he had found a beautiful musical theme, and he felt it frolicking in him like a fish in water. He did not hurry; he dawdled and looked into the shops, and stopped to pat some dog that he knew as it lay on its side and yawned in the sun.

He entered the Palace without troubling to take on a

* A nickname given by German pamphleteers to H. M. (His Majesty) the Emperor.

more official manner. At most he stopped humming, but his thoughts went dancing on inside him. He threw his hat on the table in the hall and familiarly greeted the old usher, whom he had known since he was a child. (The old man had been there on the day when Christophe had first entered the Palace, on the evening when he had seen Hassler.) But to-day the old man, who always used to reply good-humoredly to Christophe's disrespectful sallies, now seemed a little haughty. Christophe paid no heed to it. A little farther on, in the ante-chamber, he met a clerk of the chancery, who was usually full of conversation and very friendly. He was surprised to see him hurry past him to avoid having to talk. However, he did not attach any significance to it, and went on and asked to be shown in.

He went in. They had just finished dinner. His Highness was in one of the drawing-rooms. He was leaning against the mantelpiece, smoking, and talking to his guests, among whom Christophe saw *his* princess, who was also smoking. She was lying back in an armchair and talking in a loud voice to some officers who made a circle about her. The gathering was lively. They were all very merry, and when Christophe entered he heard the Grand Duke's thick laugh. But he stopped dead when he saw Christophe. He growled and pounced on him.

"Ah! There you are!" he said. "You have condescended to come at last? Do you think you can go on making fun of me any longer? You're a blackguard, sir!"

Christophe was so staggered by this brutal attack that it was some time before he could utter a word. He was thinking that he was only late, and that that could not have provoked such violence. He murmured:

"What have I done, Your Highness?"

His Highness did not listen and went on angrily:

"Be silent! I will not be insulted by a blackguard!" Christophe turned pale, and gulped so as to try to speak, for he was choking. He made an effort, and said:

"Your Highness, you have no right—you have no right to insult me without telling me what I have done."

The Grand Duke turned to his secretary, who produced

a paper from his pocket and held it out to him. He was in such a state of exasperation as could not be explained only by his anger: the fumes of good wine had their share in it, too. He came and stood in front of Christophe, and like a toreador with his cape, furiously waved the crumpled newspaper in his face and shouted:

"Your muck, sir! . . . You deserve to have your nose rubbed in it!"

Christophe recognized the socialist paper.

"I don't see what harm there is in it," he said.

"What! What!" screamed the Grand Duke. "You are impudent! . . . This rascally paper, which insults me from day to day, and spews out filthy insults upon me! . . ."

"Sire," said Christophe, "I have not read it."

"You lie!" shouted the Grand Duke.

"You shall not call me a liar," said Christophe. "I have not read it. I am only concerned with reviews, and besides, I have the right to write in whatever paper I like."

"You have no right but to hold your tongue. I have been too kind to you. I have heaped kindness upon you, you and yours, in spite of your misconduct and your father's, which would have justified me in cutting you off. I forbid you to go on writing in a paper which is hostile to me. And further: I forbid you altogether to write anything in future without my authority. I have had enough of your musical polemics. I will not allow any one who enjoys my patronage to spend his time in attacking everything which is dear to people of taste and feeling, to all true Germans. You would do better to write better music, or if that is impossible, to practise your scales and exercises. I don't want to have anything to do with a musical Bebel who amuses himself by decrying all our national glories and upsetting the minds of the people. We know what is good, thank God. We do not need to wait for you to tell us. Go to your piano, sir, or leave us in peace!"

Standing face to face with Christophe the fat man glared at him insultingly. Christophe was livid, and tried to speak. His lips moved; he stammered:

"I am not your slave. I shall say what I like and write what I like . . ."

He choked. He was almost weeping with shame and rage. His legs were trembling. He jerked his elbow and upset an ornament on a table by his side. He felt that he was in a ridiculous position. He heard people laughing. He looked down the room, and as through a mist saw the princess watching the scene and exchanging ironically commiserating remarks with her neighbors. He lost count of what exactly happened. The Grand Duke shouted. Christophe shouted louder than he without knowing what he said. The Prince's secretary and another official came towards him and tried to stop him. He pushed them away, and while he talked he waved an ash-tray which he had mechanically picked up from the table against which he was leaning. He heard the secretary say:

"Put it down! Put it down!"

And he heard himself shouting inarticulately and knocking in the edge of the table with the ash-tray.

"Go!" roared the Grand Duke, beside himself with rage. "Go! Go! I'll have you thrown out!"

The officers had come up to the Prince and were trying to calm him. The Grand Duke looked apoplectic. His eyes were starting from his head, he shouted to them to throw the rascal out. Christophe saw red. He longed to thrust his fist in the Grand Duke's face; but he was crushed under a weight of conflicting feelings: shame, fury, a remnant of shyness, of German loyalty, traditional respect, habits of humility in the Prince's presence. He tried to speak; he could not. He tried to move; he could not. He could not see or hear. He suffered them to push him along and left the room.

He passed through the impassive servants who had come up to the door, and had missed nothing of the quarrel. He had to go thirty yards to cross the ante-chamber, and it seemed a lifetime. The corridor grew longer and longer as he walked up it. He would never get out! . . . The light of day which he saw shining downstairs through the glass door was his haven. He went stumbling down the stairs. He

forgot that he was bareheaded. The old usher reminded him to take his hat. He had to gather all his forces to leave the castle, cross the court, reach his home. His teeth were chattering when he opened the door. His mother was terrified by his face and his trembling. He avoided her and refused to answer her questions. He went up to his room, shut himself in, and lay down. He was shaking so that he could not undress. His breathing came in jerks and his whole body seemed shattered. . . . Oh! If only he could see no more, feel no more, no longer have to bear with his wretched body, no longer have to struggle against ignoble life, and fall, fall, breathless, without thought, and no longer be anywhere! . . . With frightful difficulty he tore off his clothes and left them on the ground, and then flung himself into his bed and drew the coverings over him. There was no sound in the room save that of the little iron bed rattling on the tiled floor.

Louisa listened at the door. She knocked in vain. She called softly. There was no reply. She waited, anxiously listening through the silence. Then she went away. Once or twice during the day she came and listened, and again at night, before she went to bed. Day passed, and the night. The house was still. Christophe was shaking with fever. Every now and then he wept, and in the night he got up several times and shook his fist at the wall. About two o'clock, in an access of madness, he got up from his bed, sweating and half naked. He wanted to go and kill the Grand Duke. He was devoured by hate and shame. His body and his heart writhed in the fire of it. Nothing of all the storm in him could be heard outside; not a word, not a sound. With clenched teeth he fought it down and forced it back into himself.

Next morning he came down as usual. He was a wreck. He said nothing and his mother dared not question him. She knew, from the gossip of the neighborhood. All day he stayed sitting by the fire, silent, feverish, and with bent head, like a little old man. And when he was alone he wept in silence.

When it became evident to everybody that Christophe had no single support, there suddenly cropped up a host of enemies whose existence he had never suspected. All those whom he had offended, directly or indirectly, either by personal criticism or by attacking their ideas and taste, now took the offensive and avenged themselves with interest. The general public whom Christophe had tried to shake out of their apathy were quite pleased to see the insolent young man, who had presumed to reform opinion and disturb the rest of people of property, taken down a peg. Christophe was in the water. Everybody did their best to duck him.

They did not come down upon him all at once. One tried first, to spy out the land. Christophe made no response, and he struck more lustily. Others followed, and then the whole gang of them.

Christophe began bravely to work again. He refused to have anything more to do with "men of letters"—well named—makers of phrases, the sterile babblers, journalists, critics, the exploiters and traffickers of art. As for musicians he would waste no time in battling with their prejudices and jealousy. They did not want him? Very well! He did not want them. He had his work to do; he would do it. The Court had given him back his liberty; he was grateful for it. He was grateful to the people for their hostility; he could work in peace.

"They may say, write, and think what they like of me," said Christophe. "They cannot prevent my being myself. What do their ideas or their art matter to me? I deny them!"

It is all very fine to deny the world. But the world is not so easily denied by a young man's boasting. Christophe was sincere, but he was under illusion; he did not know himself. He was not a monk; he had not the temperament for renouncing the world, and besides he was not old enough to do so. At first he did not suffer much, he was plunged in composition; and while his work lasted he did not feel the want of anything. But when he came to the period of depression which follows the completion of a work and lasts

until a new work takes possession of the mind, he looked about him and was horrified by his loneliness.

Since every outlet—theaters, concerts—was closed to him, and nothing would induce him to approach those managers who had once failed him, there was nothing left but for him to publish his writings, but he could not flatter himself that it would be easier to find a publisher to produce his work than an orchestra to play it. The two or three clumsy attempts that he had made were enough; rather than expose himself to another rebuff, or to bargain with one of these music merchants and put up with his patronizing airs, he preferred to publish it at his own expense. It was an act of madness; he had some small savings out of his Court salary and the proceeds of a few concerts, but the source from which the money had come was dried up and it would be a long time before he could find another; and he should have been prudent enough to be careful with his scanty funds which had to help him over the difficult period upon which he was entering. Not only did he not do so; but, as his savings were not enough to cover the expenses of publication, he did not shrink from getting into debt. Louisa dared not say anything; she found him absolutely unreasonable, and did not understand how anybody could spend money for the sake of seeing his name on a book; but since it was a way of making him be patient and of keeping him with her, she was only too happy for him to have that satisfaction.

Instead of offering the public compositions of a familiar and undisturbing kind, in which it could feel at home, Christophe chose from among his manuscripts a suite very individual in character, which he valued highly. They were piano pieces mixed with *Lieder*, some very short and popular in style, others very elaborate and almost dramatic. The whole formed a series of impressions, joyous or mild, linked together naturally and written alternately for the piano and the voice, alone or accompanied.

The collection was published without any regard for common sense, of course. The publisher whom Christophe paid for printing and storing his *Lieder* had no other claim

to his choice than that of being his neighbor. He was not equipped for such important work; the printing went on for months; there were mistakes and expensive corrections. Christophe knew nothing about it and the whole thing cost more by a third than it need have done; the expenses far exceeded anything he had anticipated. Then when it was done, Christophe found an enormous edition on his hands and did not know what to do with it. The publisher had no customers; he took no steps to circulate the work. And his apathy was quite in accord with Christophe's attitude. When he asked him, to satisfy his conscience, to write him a short advertisement of it, Christophe replied that "he did not want any advertisement; if his music was good it would speak for itself." The publisher religiously respected his wishes; he put the edition away in his warehouse. It was well kept; for in six months not a copy was sold.

III DELIVERANCE

He had no one. All his friends had disappeared. His dear Gottfried, who had come to his aid in times of difficulty, and whom now he so sorely needed, had gone some months before. This time forever. One evening in the summer of the last year a letter in large handwriting, bearing the address of a distant village, had informed Louisa that her brother had died upon one of his vagabond journeys which the little peddler had insisted on making, in spite of his ill health. He was buried there in the cemetery of the place. The last manly and serene friendship which could have supported Christophe had been swallowed up. He was left alone with his old mother, who cared nothing for his ideas—could only love him and not understand him. About him was the immense plain of Germany, the green ocean. At every attempt to climb out of it he only slipped back deeper than ever. The hostile town watched him drown. . . .

And as he was struggling a light flashed upon him in the middle of the night, the image of Hassler, the great musician whom he had loved so much when he was a child. His

fame shone over all Germany now. He remembered the promises that Hassler had made him then. And he clung to this piece of wreckage in desperation. Hassler could save him! Hassler must save him! What was he asking? Not help, nor money, nor material assistance of any kind. Nothing but understanding. Hassler had been persecuted like him. Hassler was a free man. He would understand a free man, whom German mediocrity was pursuing with its spite and trying to crush. They were fighting the same battle.

He carried the idea into execution as soon as it occurred to him. He told his mother that he would be away for a week, and that very evening he took the train for the great town in the north of Germany where Hassler was *Kapellmeister*. He could not wait. It was a last effort to breathe.

Hassler was famous. His enemies had not disarmed, but his friends cried that he was the greatest musician, present, past and future. He was surrounded by partisans and detractors who were equally absurd. As he was not of a very firm character, he had been embittered by the last, and mollified by the first. He devoted his energy to writing things to annoy his critics and make them cry out. He was like an urchin playing pranks. These pranks were often in the most detestable taste. Not only did he devote his prodigious talent to musical eccentricities which made the hair of the pontiffs stand on end, but he showed a perverse predilection for queer themes, bizarre subjects, and often for equivocal and scabrous situations; in a word, for everything which could offend ordinary good sense and decency. He was quite happy when the people howled, and the people did not fail him. Even the Emperor, who dabbled in art, as every one knows, with the insolent presumption of upstarts and princes, regarded Hassler's fame as a public scandal, and let no opportunity slip of showing his contemptuous indifference to his impudent works. Hassler was enraged and delighted by such august opposition, which had almost become a consecration for the advanced paths in German art, and went on smashing windows. At every new folly his friends went into ecstasies and cried that he was a genius.

Hassler's coterie was chiefly composed of writers, painters, and decadent critics who certainly had the merit of representing the party of revolt against the reaction—always a menace in North Germany—of the pietistic spirit and State morality; but in the struggle the independence had been carried to a pitch of absurdity of which they were unconscious. For, if many of them were not lacking in a rude sort of talent, they had little intelligence and less taste. They could not rise above the fastidious atmosphere which they had created, and like all cliques, they had ended by losing all sense of real life. They legislated for themselves and hundreds of fools who read their reviews and gulped down everything they were pleased to promulgate. Their adulation had been fatal to Hassler, for it had made him too pleased with himself. He accepted without examination every musical idea that came into his head, and he had a private conviction, however he might fall below his own level, he was still superior to that of all other musicians. And though that idea was only too true in the majority of cases, it did not follow that it was a very fit state of mind for the creation of great works. At heart Hassler had a supreme contempt for everybody, friends and enemies alike; and this bitter jeering contempt was extended to himself and life in general. He was all the more driven back into his ironic skepticism because he had once believed in a number of generous and simple things. As he had not been strong enough to ward off the slow destruction of the passing of the days, nor hypocritical enough to pretend to believe in the faith he had lost, he was forever gibing at the memory of it. He was of a Southern German nature, soft and indolent, not made to resist excess of fortune or misfortune, of heat or cold, needing a moderate temperature to preserve its balance. He had drifted insensibly into a lazy enjoyment of life. He loved good food, heavy drinking, idle lounging, and sensuous thoughts. His whole art smacked of these things, although he was too gifted for the flashes of his genius not still to shine forth from his lax music which drifted with the fashion. No one was more conscious than himself of his decay. In truth, he was the only one to be

conscious of it—at rare moments which, naturally, he avoided. Besides, he was misanthropic, absorbed by his fearful moods, his egoistic preoccupations, his concern about his health—he was indifferent to everything which had formerly excited his enthusiasm or hatred.

Such was the man to whom Christophe came for assistance. With what joy and hope he arrived, one cold, wet morning, in the town wherein then lived the man who symbolized for him the spirit of independence in his art! He expected words of friendship and encouragement from him—words that he needed to help him to go on with the ungrateful, inevitable battle which every true artist has to wage against the world until he breathes his last, without even for one day laying down his arms; for, as Schiller has said, *“the only relation with the public of which a man never repents—is war.”*

Christophe was so impatient that he just left his bag at the first hotel he came to near the station, and then ran to the theater to find out Hassler’s address. Hassler lived some way from the center of the town, in one of the suburbs. Christophe took an electric train, and hungrily ate a roll. His heart thumped as he approached his goal.

He reached the house he sought. Inside was rich luxury, commonplace enough. On the staircase was the heavy atmosphere of hot air. There was a small lift which Christophe did not use, as he wanted to gain time to prepare himself for his call by going up the four flights of stairs slowly, with his legs giving and his heart thumping with his excitement. During that short ascent his former interview with Hassler, his childish enthusiasm, the image of his grandfather were as clearly in his mind as though it had all been yesterday.

It was nearly eleven when he rang the bell. He was received by a sharp maid, with a *serva padrona* manner, who looked at him impertinently and began to say that “Herr Hassler could not see him, as Herr Hassler was tired.” Then the naïve disappointment expressed in Christophe’s face amused her; for after making an unabashed scrutiny of him

from head to foot, she softened suddenly and introduced him to Hassler's study, and said she would go and see if Herr Hassler would receive him. Thereupon she gave him a little wink and closed the door.

On the walls were a few impressionist paintings and some gallant French engravings of the eighteenth century: for Hassler pretended to some knowledge of all the arts, and Manet and Watteau were joined together in his taste in accordance with the prescription of his coterie. The same mixture of styles appeared in the furniture, and a very fine Louis XV bureau was surrounded by new art armchairs and an oriental divan with a mountain of multi-colored cushions. The doors were ornamented with mirrors, and Japanese bric-a-brac covered the shelves and the mantelpiece, on which stood a bust of Hassler. In a bowl on a round table was a profusion of photographs of singers, female admirers and friends, with witty remarks and enthusiastic interjections. The bureau was incredibly untidy. The piano was open. The shelves were dusty, and half-smoked cigars were lying about everywhere.

In the next room Christophe heard a cross voice grumbling. It was answered by the shrill tones of the little maid. It was clear that Hassler was not very pleased at having to appear. It was clear, also, that the young woman had decided that Hassler should appear; and she answered him with extreme familiarity and her shrill voice penetrated the walls. Christophe was rather upset at hearing some of the remarks she made to her master. But Hassler did not seem to mind. On the contrary, it rather seemed as though her impertinence amused him; and while he went on growling, he chaffed the girl and took a delight in exciting her. At last Christophe heard a door open, and, still growling and chaffing, Hassler came shuffling.

He entered. Christophe's heart sank. He recognized him. Would to God he had not! It was Hassler, and yet it was not he. He still had his great smooth brow, his face as un-wrinkled as that of a babe; but he was bald, stout, yellowish, sleepy-looking; his lower lip drooped a little, his mouth looked bored and sulky. He hunched his shoulders, buried

his hands in the pockets of his open waistcoat; old shoes flopped on his feet; his shirt was bagged above his trousers, which he had not finished buttoning. He looked at Christophe with his sleepy eyes, in which there was no light as the young man murmured his name. He bowed automatically, said nothing, nodded towards a chair, and with a sigh, sank down on the divan and piled the cushions about himself. Christophe repeated:

"I have already had the honor . . . You were kind enough . . . My name is Christophe Krafft. . . ."

Hassler lay back on the divan, with his legs crossed, his hands clasped together on his right knee, which he held up to his chin as he replied:

"I don't remember."

Christophe's throat went dry, and he tried to remind him of their former meeting. Under any circumstances it would have been difficult for him to talk of memories so intimate; now it was torture for him. He bungled his sentences, could not find words, said absurd things which made him blush. Hassler let him flounder on and never ceased to look at him with his vague, indifferent eyes. When Christophe had reached the end of his story, Hassler went on rocking his knee in silence for a moment, as though he were waiting for Christophe to go on. Then he said:

"Yes . . . That does not make us young again . . ." and stretched his legs.

After a yawn he added:

". . . I beg pardon . . . Did not sleep . . . Supper at the theater last night . . ." and yawned again.

Christophe hoped that Hassler would make some reference to what he had just told him, but Hassler, whom the story had not interested at all, said nothing about it, and he did not ask Christophe anything about his life. When he had done yawning he asked:

"Have you been in Berlin long?"

"I arrived this morning," said Christophe.

"Ah!" said Hassler, without any surprise. "What hotel?"

He did not seem to listen to the reply, but got up lazily and pressed an electric bell.

"Allow me," he said.

The little maid appeared with her impertinent manner.

"Kitty," said he, "are you trying to make me go without breakfast this morning?"

"You don't think I am going to bring it here while you have some one with you?"

"Why not?" he said, with a wink and a nod in Christophe's direction. "He feeds my mind: I must feed my body."

"Aren't you ashamed to have some one watching you eat—like an animal in a menagerie?"

Instead of being angry, Hassler began to laugh and corrected her:

"Like a domestic animal," he went on. "But do bring it. I'll eat my shame with it."

Christophe saw that Hassler was making no attempt to find out what he was doing, and tried to lead the conversation back. He spoke of the difficulties of provincial life, of the mediocrity of the people, the narrow-mindedness, and of his own isolation. He tried to interest him in his moral distress. But Hassler was sunk deep in the divan, with his head lying back on a cushion and his eyes half closed, and let him go on talking without even seeming to listen; or he would raise his eyelids for a moment and pronounce a few coldly ironical words, some ponderous jest at the expense of provincial people, which cut short Christophe's attempts to talk more intimately. Kitty returned with the breakfast tray: coffee, butter, ham, etc. She put it down crossly on the desk in the middle of the untidy papers. Christophe waited until she had gone before he went on with his sad story which he had such difficulty in continuing. Hassler drew the tray towards himself. He poured himself out some coffee and sipped at it. Then in a familiar and cordial though rather contemptuous way he stopped Christophe in the middle of a sentence to ask if he would take a cup.

Christophe refused. He tried to pick up the thread of his sentence, but he was more and more nonplussed, and did not know what he was saying. He was distracted by the sight of Hassler with his plate under his chin, like a child,

gorging pieces of bread and butter and slices of ham which he held in his fingers. However, he did succeed in saying that he composed, that he had had an overture in the *Judith* of Hebbel performed. Hassler listened absently.

"Was?" (What?) he asked.

Christophe repeated the title.

"Ach! So, so!" (Ah! Good, good!) said Hassler, dipping his bread and his fingers into his cup. That was all.

Christophe was discouraged and was on the point of getting up and going, but he thought of his long journey in vain, and summoning up all his courage he murmured a proposal that he should play some of his works to Hassler. At the first mention of it Hassler stopped him.

"No, no. I don't know anything about it," he said, with his chaffing and rather insulting irony. "Besides, I haven't the time."

Tears came to Christophe's eyes. But he had vowed not to leave until he had Hassler's opinion about his work. He said, with a mixture of confusion and anger:

"I beg your pardon, but you promised once to hear me. I came to see you for that from the other end of Germany. You shall hear me."

Hassler, who was not used to such ways, looked at the awkward young man, who was furious, blushing, and near tears. That amused him, and wearily shrugging his shoulders, he pointed to the piano, and said with an air of comic resignation:

"Well, then! . . . There you are!"

On that he lay back on his divan, like a man who is going to sleep, smoothed out his cushions, put them under his outstretched arms, half closed his eyes, opened them for a moment to take stock of the size of the roll of music which Christophe had brought from one of his pockets, gave a little sigh, and lay back to listen listlessly.

Christophe was intimidated and mortified, but he began to play. It was not long before Hassler opened his eyes and ears with the professional interest of the artist who is struck in spite of himself by a beautiful thing. At first he said nothing and lay still, but his eyes became less dim and his

sulky lips moved. Then he suddenly woke up, growling his surprise and approbation. He only gave inarticulate interjections, but the form of them left no doubt as to his feelings, and they gave Christophe an inexpressible pleasure. Hassler forgot to count the number of pages that had been played and were left to be played. When Christophe had finished a piece, he said:

"Go on! . . . Go on! . . ."

He was beginning to use human language.

"That's good! Good!" he exclaimed to himself. "Famous! . . . Awfully famous! (*Schrecklich famos!*) But, damme!" He growled in astonishment. "What is it?"

He had risen on his seat, was stretching for wind, making a trumpet with his hand, talking to himself, laughing with pleasure, or at certain odd harmonies, just putting out his tongue as though to moisten his lips. An unexpected modulation had such an effect on him that he got up suddenly with an exclamation, and came and sat at the piano by Christophe's side. He did not seem to notice that Christophe was there. He was only concerned with the music, and when the piece was finished he took the book and began to read the page again, then the following pages, and went on ejaculating his admiration and surprise as though he had been alone in the room.

"The devil!" he said. "Where did the little beast find that? . . ."

He pushed Christophe away with his shoulders and himself played certain passages. He had a charming touch on the piano, very soft, caressing and light. Christophe noticed his fine long, well-tended hands, which were a little morbidly aristocratic and out of keeping with the rest. Hassler stopped at certain chords and repeated them, winking, and clicking with his tongue. He hummed with his lips, imitating the sounds of the instruments, and went on interspersing the music with his apostrophes in which pleasure and annoyance were mingled. He could not help having a secret initiative, an unavowed jealousy, and at the same time he greedily enjoyed it all.

Although he went on talking to himself as though Christophe did not exist, Christophe, blushing with pleasure, could not help taking Hassler's exclamations to himself, and he explained what he had tried to do. At first Hassler seemed not to pay any attention to what the young man was saying, and went on thinking out loud; then something that Christophe said struck him and he was silent, with his eyes still fixed on the music, which he turned over as he listened without seeming to hear. Christophe grew more and more excited, and at last he plumped into confidence, and talked with naïve enthusiasm about his projects and his life.

Hassler was silent, and as he listened he slipped back into his irony. He had let Christophe take the book from his hands; with his elbow on the rack of the piano and his hand on his forehead, he looked at Christophe, who was explaining his work with youthful ardor and eagerness. And he smiled bitterly as he thought of his own beginning, his own hopes, and of Christophe's hopes, and all the disappointments that lay in wait for him.

Christophe spoke with his eyes cast down, fearful of losing the thread of what he had to say. Hassler's silence encouraged him. He felt that Hassler was watching him and not missing a word that he said, and he thought he had broken the ice between them, and he was glad at heart. When he had finished he shyly raised his head—confidently, too—and looked at Hassler. All the joy welling in him was frozen on the instant, like too early birds, when he saw the gloomy, mocking eyes that looked into his without kindness. He was silent.

After an icy moment, Hassler spoke dully. He had changed once more; he affected a sort of harshness towards the young man. He teased him cruelly about his plans, his hopes of success, as though he were trying to chaff himself, now that he had recovered himself. He set himself coldly to destroy his faith in life, his faith in art, his faith in himself. Bitterly he gave himself as an example, speaking of his actual works in an insulting fashion.

"Hog-waste!" he said. "That is what these swine want. Do you think there are ten people in the world who love music? Is there a single one?"

"There is myself!" said Christophe emphatically. Hassler looked at him, shrugged his shoulders, and said wearily:

"You will be like the rest. You will do as the rest have done. You will think of success, of amusing yourself, like the rest. . . . And you will be right. . . ."

Christophe tried to protest, but Hassler cut him short; he took the music and began bitterly to criticise the works which he had first been praising. Not only did he harshly pick out the real carelessness, the mistakes in writing, the faults of taste or of expression which had escaped the young man, but he made absurd criticisms, criticisms which might have been made by the most narrow and antiquated of musicians, from which he himself, Hassler, had had to suffer all his life. He asked what was the sense of it all. He did not even criticise: he denied; it was as though he were trying desperately to efface the impression that the music had made on him in spite of himself.

Christophe was horrified and made no attempt to reply. How could he reply to absurdities which he blushed to hear on the lips of a man whom he esteemed and loved? Besides, Hassler did not listen to him. He stopped at that, stopped dead, with the book in his hands, shut; no expression in his eyes and his lips drawn down in bitterness. At last he said, as though he had once more forgotten Christophe's presence:

"Ah! the worst misery of all is that there is not a single man who can understand you!"

Christophe was racked with emotion. He turned suddenly, laid his hand on Hassler's, and with love in his heart he repeated:

"There is myself!"

But Hassler did not move his hand, and if something stirred in his heart for a moment at that boyish cry, no light shone in his dull eyes, as they looked at Christophe. Irony and evasion were in the ascendant. He made a ceremonious and comic little bow in acknowledgment.

"Honored!" he said.

He was thinking:

"Do you, though? Do you think I have lost my life for you?"

He got up, threw the book on the piano, and went with his long spindle legs and sat on the divan again. Christophe had divined his thoughts and had felt the savage insult in them, and he tried proudly to reply that a man does not need to be understood by everybody; certain souls are worth a whole people; they think for it, and what they have thought the people have to think.—But Hassler did not listen to him. He had fallen back into his apathy, caused by the weakening of the life slumbering in him. Christophe, too sane to understand the sudden change, felt that he had lost. But he could not resign himself to losing after seeming to be so near victory. He made desperate efforts to excite Hassler's attention once more. He took up his music book and tried to explain the reason for the irregularities which Hassler had remarked. Hassler lay back on the sofa and preserved a gloomy silence. He neither agreed nor contradicted; he was only waiting for him to finish.

Christophe saw that there was nothing more to be done. He stopped short in the middle of a sentence. He rolled up his music and got up. Hassler got up, too. Christophe was shy and ashamed, and murmured excuses. Hassler bowed slightly, with a certain haughty and bored distinction, coldly held out his hand politely, and accompanied him to the door without a word of suggestion that he should stay or come again.

Christophe found himself in the street once more, absolutely crushed. He walked at random; he did not know where he was going. He walked down several streets mechanically, and then found himself at a station of the train by which he had come. He went back by it without thinking of what he was doing. He sank down on the seat with his arms and legs limp. It was impossible to think or to collect his ideas; he thought of nothing, he did not try to think. He was afraid to envisage himself. He was utterly

empty. It seemed to him that there was emptiness everywhere about him in that town. He could not breathe in it. The mists, the massive houses stifled him. He had only one idea, to fly, to fly as quickly as possible,—as if by escaping from the town he would leave in it the bitter disillusion which he had found in it.

He returned to his hotel. It was half-past twelve. It was two hours since he had entered it,—with what a light shining in his heart! Now it was dead.

He took no lunch. He did not go up to his room. To the astonishment of the people of the hotel, he asked for his bill, paid as though he had spent the night there, and said that he was going. In vain did they explain to him that there was no hurry, that the train he wanted to go by did not leave for hours, and that he had much better wait in the hotel. He insisted on going to the station at once. He was like a child. He wanted to go by the first train, no matter which, and not to stay another hour in the place. After the long journey and all the expense he had incurred,—although he had taken his holiday not only to see Hassler, but the museums, and to hear concerts and to make certain acquaintances—he had only one idea in his head: To go . . .

He went back to the station. As he had been told, his train did not leave for three hours. And also the train was not express—(for Christophe had to go by the cheapest class)—stopped on the way. Christophe would have done better to go by the next train, which went two hours later and caught up the first. But that meant spending two more hours in the place, and Christophe could not bear it. He would not even leave the station while he was waiting.—A gloomy period of waiting in those vast and empty halls, dark and noisy, where strange shadows were going in and out, always busy, always hurrying; strange shadows who meant nothing to him, all unknown to him, not one friendly face. The misty day died down. The electric lamps, enveloped in fog, flushed the night and made it darker than ever. Christophe grew more and more depressed as time went on, waiting in agony for the time to go. Ten times

an hour he went to look at the train indicators to make sure that he had not made a mistake.

His train at last was ready. He was the first to get into it, and he was so childish that he only began to breathe again when the train shook, and through the carriage window he could see the outlines of the town fading into the gray sky under the heavy downpour of the night. He thought he must have died if he had spent the night in it.

At the very hour—about six in the evening—a letter from Hassler came for Christophe at his hotel. Christophe's visit stirred many things in him. The whole afternoon he had been thinking of it bitterly, and not without sympathy for the poor boy who had come to him with such eager affection to be received so coldly. He was sorry for that reception and a little angry with himself. In truth, it had been only one of those fits of sulky whimsies to which he was subject. He thought to make it good by sending Christophe a ticket for the opera and a few words appointing a meeting after the performance.—Christophe never knew anything about it. When he did not see him, Hassler thought:

"He is angry. So much the worse for him!"

He shrugged his shoulders and did not wait long for him.

Next day Christophe was far away—so far that all eternity would not have been enough to bring them together. And they were separated forever.

Several months passed. Christophe had lost all hope of escaping from the town. Hassler, the only man who could have saved him, had refused to help him. He made up his mind to go. But he could not go because of his mother.

Louisa was growing old. She adored her son, who was her only joy, and she was all that he most loved on earth. And yet they were always hurting each other. She hardly understood Christophe, and did not try to understand him. She was only concerned to love him. She had a narrow, timid, dull mind, and a fine heart; an immense need of loving and being loved in which there was something touching

and sad. She respected her son because he seemed to her to be very learned; but she did all she could to stifle his genius. She thought he would stay all his life with her in their little town. They had lived together for years, and she could not imagine that he would not always be the same. She was happy: why should he not be happy, too? All her dreams for him soared no higher than seeing him married to some prosperous citizen of the town, hearing him play the organ at church on Sundays, and never having him leave her. She regarded her son as though he were still twelve years old. She would have liked him never to be more than that. Innocently she inflicted torture on the unhappy man who was suffocated in that narrow world.

For a long time he had been wanting to announce his determination to his mother. But he was fearful of the grief it would bring to her, and just as he was about to speak he would lose his courage and put it off. Two or three times he did timidly allude to his departure, but Louisa did not take him seriously:—perhaps she preferred not to take him seriously, so as to persuade him that he was talking in jest. Then he dared not go on; but he would remain gloomy and thoughtful, or it was apparent that he had some secret burden upon his soul. And the poor woman, who had an intuition as to the nature of that secret, tried fearfully to delay the confession of it. Sometimes in the evening, when they were sitting, silent, in the light of the lamp, she would suddenly feel that he was going to speak, and then in terror she would begin to talk, very quickly, at random, about nothing in particular. She hardly knew what she was saying, but at all costs she must keep him from speaking. Generally her instinct made her find the best means of imposing silence on him: she would complain about her health, about the swelling of her hands and feet, and the cramps in her legs. She would exaggerate her sickness: call herself an old, useless, bed-ridden woman. He was not deceived by her simple tricks. He would look at her sadly in dumb reproach, and after a moment he would get up, saying that he was tired, and go to bed. But all her devices could not save Louisa for long.

It was a Sunday in October. Four o'clock in the afternoon. The weather was brilliant. Christophe had stayed in his room all day, chewing the cud of melancholy.

He could bear it no longer; he wanted desperately to go out, to walk, to expend his energy, to tire himself out, so as to stop thinking.

Relations with his mother had been strained since the day before. He was just going out without saying good-bye to her; but on the stairs he thought how it would hurt her the whole evening when she was left alone. He went back, making an excuse of having left something in his room. The door of his mother's room was ajar. He put his head in through the aperture. He watched his mother for a few moments. . . . (What a place those two seconds were to fill in his life ever after!) . . .

Louisa had just come in from vespers. She was sitting in her favorite place, the recess of the window. The wall of the house opposite, dirty white and cracked, obstructed the view, but from the corner where she sat she could see to the right through the yards of the next houses a little patch of lawn the size of a pocket-handkerchief. On the window sill a pot of convolvulus climbed along its threads and over this frail ladder stretched its tendrils which were caressed by a ray of sunlight. Louisa was sitting in a low chair bending over her great Bible which was open on her lap, but she was not reading. Her hands were laid flat on the book—her hands with their swollen veins, worker's nails, square and a little bent—and she was devouring with loving eyes the little plant and the patch of sky she could see through it. A sunbeam, basking on the green gold leaves, lit up her tired face, with its rather blotchy complexion, her white, soft, and rather thick hair, and her lips, parted in a smile. She was enjoying her hour of rest. It was the best moment of the week to her. She made use of it to sink into that state so sweet to those who suffer, when thoughts dwell on nothing, and in torpor nothing speaks save the heart and that is half asleep.

"Mother," he said, "I want to go out. I am going by Buir. I shall be rather late."

Louisa, who was dozing off, trembled a little. Then she turned her head towards him and looked at him with her calm, kind eyes.

"Yes, my dear, go," she said. "You are right; make use of the fine weather."

She smiled at him. He smiled at her. They looked at each other for a moment, then they said good-night affectionately, nodding and smiling with the eyes.

He closed the door softly. She slipped back into her reverie, which her son's smile had lit up with a bright ray of light like the sunbeam on the pale leaves of the convolvulus.

So he left her—forever.

An October evening. A pale watery sun. The drowsy country is sinking to sleep. Little village bells are slowly ringing in the silence of the fields. Columns of smoke rise slowly in the midst of the plowed fields. A fine mist hovers in the distance. The white fogs are awaiting the coming of the night to rise. . . . A dog with his nose to the ground was running in circles in a field of beets. Great flocks of crows whirled against the gray sky.

Christophe went on dreaming, having no fixed object, but yet instinctively he was walking in a definite direction. For several weeks his walks round the town had gravitated whether he liked it or not towards another village where he was sure to meet a pretty girl who attracted him. It was only an attraction, but it was very vivid and rather disturbing. Christophe could hardly do without loving some one; and his heart was rarely left empty; it always had some lovely image for its idol. Generally it did not matter whether the idol knew of his love; his need was to love, the fire must never be allowed to go out; there must never be darkness in his heart.

The object of this new flame was the daughter of a peasant whom he had met, as Eliézer met Rebecca, by a well; but she did not give him to drink; she threw water in his face. She was kneeling by the edge of a stream in a hollow in the bank between two willows, the roots of which

made a sort of nest about her; she was washing linen vigorously; and her tongue was not less active than her arms; she was talking and laughing loudly with other girls of the village who were washing opposite her on the other side of the stream. Christophe was lying in the grass a few yards away, and, with his chin resting in his hands, he watched them. They were not put out by it; they went on chattering in a style which sometimes did not lack bluntness. He hardly listened; he heard only the sound of their merry voices, mingling with the noise of their washing pots, and with the distant lowing of the cows in the meadows, and he was dreaming, never taking his eyes off the beautiful washerwoman. A bright young face would make him glad for a whole day. It was not long before the girls made out which of them he was looking at; and they made caustic remarks to each other; the girl he preferred was not the least cutting in the observations she threw at him. As he did not budge, she got up, took a bundle of linen washed and wrung, and began to lay it out on the bushes near him so as to have an excuse for looking at him. As she passed him she continued to splash him with her wet clothes and she looked at him boldly and laughed. She was thin and strong: she had a fine chin, a little underhung, a short nose, arching eyebrows, deep-set blue eyes, bold, bright and hard, a pretty mouth with thick lips, pouting a little like those of a Greek maid, a mass of fair hair turned up in a knot on her head, and a full color. She carried her head very erect, tittered at every word she said and even when she said nothing, and walked like a man, swinging her sunburned arms. She went on laying out her linen while she looked at Christophe with a provoking smile—waiting for him to speak. Christophe stared at her too; but he had no desire to talk to her. At last she burst out laughing to his face and turned back towards her companions. He stayed lying where he was until evening fell and he saw her go with her bundle on her back and her bare arms crossed, her back bent under her load, still talking and laughing. Her name was Lorchen.

He came back more than once to prowl round the vil-

lage where she lived. She would be about the yard of the farm; he would stop on the road to look at her. He did not admit that he came to see her, and indeed he did so almost unconsciously. When, as often happened, he was absorbed by the composition of some work he would be rather like a somnambulist: while his conscious soul was following its musical ideas the rest of him would be delivered up to the other unconscious soul which is forever watching for the smallest distraction of the mind to take the freedom of the fields. He was often bewildered by the buzzing of his musical ideas when he was face to face with her; and he would go on dreaming as he watched her. He could not have said that he loved her; he did not even think of that; it gave him pleasure to see her, nothing more. He did not take stock of the desire which was always bringing him back to her.

His insistence was remarked. The people at the farm joked about it, for they had discovered who Christophe was. But they left him in peace; for he was quite harmless. He looked silly enough in truth but he never bothered about it.

There was a holiday in the village. Little boys were crushing crackers between stones and shouting "God save the Emperor!" ("*Kaiser lebe! Hoch!*"). A cow shut up in the barn and the men drinking at the inn were to be heard. Kites with long tails like comets dipped and swung in the air above the fields. The fowls were scratching frantically in the straw and the golden dung-heap; the wind blew out their feathers like the skirts of an old lady. A pink pig was sleeping voluptuously on his side in the sun.

Christophe made his way towards the red roof of the inn of the *Three Kings* above which floated a little flag. Strings of onions hung by the door, and the windows were decorated with red and yellow flowers. He went into the saloon, filled with tobacco smoke, where yellowing chromos hung on the walls and in the place of honor a colored portrait of the Emperor-King surrounded with a wreath of oak leaves. People were dancing. Christophe was sure his

charmer would be there. He sat in a corner of the room from which he could watch the movement of the dancers undisturbed. But in spite of all his care to pass unnoticed Lorchen spied him out in his corner. While she waltzed indefatigably she threw quick glances at him over her partner's shoulder to make sure that he was still looking at her; and it amused her to excite him; she coquetted with the young men of the village, laughing the while with her wide mouth. She talked a great deal and said silly things and was not very different from the girls of the polite world who think they must laugh and move about and play to the gallery when anybody looks at them, instead of keeping their foolishness to themselves. But they are not so very foolish either; for they know quite well that the gallery only looks at them and does not listen to what they say.—With his elbows on the table and his chin in his hands Christophe watched the girl's tricks with burning, furious eyes; his mind was free enough not to be taken in by her wiles, but he was not enough himself not to be led on by them; and he growled with rage and he laughed in silence and shrugged his shoulders in falling into the snare.

Lorchen had ceased to pay any attention to Christophe; she was too busy turning the head of a young lout of the village, the son of a rich farmer, for whom all the girls were competing. Christophe was interested by the struggle; the young women smiled at each other and would have been only too pleased to scratch each other. Christophe forgot himself and prayed for the triumph of Lorchen. But when her triumph was won he felt a little downcast. He was enraged by it. He did not love Lorchen; he did not want to be loved by her; it was natural that she should love anybody she liked.—No doubt. But it was not pleasant to receive so little sympathy himself when he had so much need of giving and receiving. Here, as in the town, he was alone. All these people were only interested in him while they could make use of him and then laugh at him. He sighed, smiled as he looked at Lorchen, whom her joy in the discomfiture of her rivals had made ten times pret-

tier than ever, and got ready to go. It was nearly nine. He had fully two miles to go to the town.

He got up from the table when the door opened and a handful of soldiers burst in. Their entry dashed the gaiety of the place. The people began to whisper. A few couples stopped dancing to look uneasily at the new arrivals. The peasants standing near the door deliberately turned their backs on them and began to talk among themselves; but without seeming to do so they presently contrived to leave room for them to pass. For some time past the whole neighborhood had been at loggerheads with the garrisons of the fortresses round it. The soldiers were bored to death and wreaked their vengeance on the peasants. They made coarse fun of them, maltreated them, and used the women as though they were in a conquered country. The week before some of them, full of wine, had disturbed a feast at a neighboring village and had half killed a farmer. Christophe, who knew these things, shared the state of mind of the peasant, and he sat down again and waited to see what would happen.

The soldiers were not worried by the ill-will with which their entry was received, and went noisily and sat down at the full tables, jostling the people away from them to make room; it was the affair of a moment. Most of the people went away grumbling. An old man sitting at the end of a bench did not move quickly enough; they lifted the bench and the old man toppled over amid roars of laughter. Christophe felt the blood rushing to his head; he got up indignantly; but, as he was on the point of interfering, he saw the old man painfully pick himself up and instead of complaining humbly crave pardon. Two of the soldiers came to Christophe's table; he watched them come and clenched his fists. But he did not have to defend himself. They were two tall, strong, good-humored louts, who had followed sheepishly one or two daredevils and were trying to imitate them. They were intimidated by Christophe's defiant manner, and when he said curtly: "This place is taken," they hastily begged his pardon and withdrew to their end of the bench so as not to disturb him.

There had been a masterful inflection in his voice; their natural servility came to the fore. They saw that Christophe was not a peasant.

Christophe was a little mollified by their submission, and was able to watch things more coolly. It was not difficult to see that the gang were led by a non-commissioned officer—a little bull-dog of a man with hard eyes—with a rascally, hypocritical and wicked face; he was one of the heroes of the affray of the Sunday before. He was sitting at the table next to Christophe. He was drunk already and stared at the people and threw insulting sarcasms at them which they pretended not to hear. He attacked especially the couples dancing, describing their physical advantages or defects with a coarseness of expression which made his companions laugh. The girls blushed and tears came to their eyes; the young men ground their teeth and raged in silence. Their tormentor's eyes wandered slowly round the room, sparing nobody; Christophe saw them moving towards himself. He seized his mug, and clenched his fist on the table and waited, determined to throw the liquor at his head on the first insult. He said to himself:

"I am mad. It would be better to go away. They will slit me up; and then if I escape they will put me in prison; the game is not worth the candle. I'd better go before he provokes me."

But his pride would not let him, he would not seem to be running away from such brutes as these. The officer's cunning brutal stare was fixed on him. Christophe stiffened and glared at him angrily. The officer looked at him for a moment; Christophe's face irritated him; he nudged his neighbor and pointed out the young man with a snigger; and he opened his lips to insult him. Christophe gathered himself together and was just about to fling his mug at him. . . . Once more chance saved him. Just as the drunken man was about to speak an awkward couple of dancers bumped into him and made him drop his glass. He turned furiously and let loose a flood of insults. His attention was distracted; he forgot Christophe. Christophe waited for a few minutes longer; then seeing that his enemy had no

thought of going on with his remarks he got up, slowly took his hat and walked leisurely towards the door. He did not take his eyes off the bench where the other was sitting, just to let him feel that he was not giving in to him. But the officer had forgotten him altogether; no one took any notice of him.

He was just turning the handle of the door; in a few seconds he would have been outside. But it was ordered that he should not leave so soon. An angry murmur rose at the end of the room. When the soldiers had drunk they had decided to dance. And as all the girls had their cavaliers they drove away their partners, who submitted to it. But Lorchen was not going to put up with that. It was not for nothing that she had her bold eyes and her firm chin which so charmed Christophe. She was waltzing like a mad thing when the officer who had fixed his choice upon her came and pulled her partner away from her. She stamped with her foot, screamed, and pushed the soldier away, declaring that she would never dance with such a boor. He pursued her. He dispersed with his fists the people behind whom she was trying to hide. At last she took refuge behind a table; and then protected from him for a moment she took breath to scream abuse at him; she saw that all her resistance would be useless and she stamped with rage and groped for the most violent words to fling at him and compared his face to that of various animals of the farm-yard. He leaned towards her over the table, smiled wickedly, and his eyes glittered with rage. Suddenly he pounced and jumped over the table. He caught hold of her. She struggled with feet and fists like the cow-woman she was. He was not too steady on his legs and almost lost his balance. In his fury he flung her against the wall and slapped her face. He had no time to do it again; some one had jumped on his back, and was cuffing him and kicking him back into the crowd. It was Christophe who had flung himself on him, overturning tables and people without stopping to think of what he was doing. Mad with rage, the officer turned and drew his saber. Before he could make use of it Christophe felled him with a

stool. The whole thing had been so sudden that none of the spectators had time to think of interfering. The other soldiers ran to Christophe drawing their sabers. The peasants flung themselves at them. The uproar became general. Mugs flew across the room; the tables were overturned. The peasants woke up; they had old scores to pay off. The men rolled about on the ground and bit each other savagely. Lorchen's partner, a stolid farm-hand, had caught hold of the head of the soldier who had just insulted him and was banging it furiously against the wall. Lorchen, armed with a cudgel, was striking out blindly. The other girls ran away screaming, except for a few wantons who joined in heartily. One of them—a fat little fair girl—seeing a gigantic soldier—the same who had sat at Christophe's table—crushing in the chest of his prostrate adversary with his boot, ran to the fire, came back, dragged the brute's head backwards and flung a handful of burning ashes into his eyes. The man bellowed. The girl gloated, abused the disarmed enemy, whom the peasants now thwacked at their ease. At last the soldiers finding themselves on the losing side rushed away leaving two of their number on the floor. The fight went on in the village street. They burst into the houses crying murder, and trying to smash everything. The peasants followed them with forks, and set their savage dogs on them. A third soldier fell with his belly cleft by a fork. The others had to fly and were hunted out of the village, and from a distance they shouted as they ran across the fields that they would fetch their comrades and come back immediately.

The peasants, left masters of the field, returned to the inn; they were exultant; it was a revenge for all the outrages they had suffered for so long. They had as yet no thought of the consequences of the affray. They all talked at once and boasted of their prowess. They fraternized with Christophe, who was delighted to feel in touch with them. Lorchen came and took his hand and held it for a moment in her rough paw while she giggled at him. She did not think him ridiculous for the moment.

They looked to the wounded. Among the villagers there

were only a few teeth knocked out, a few ribs broken and a few slight bruises and scars. But it was very different with the soldiers. They were seriously injured: the giant whose eyes had been burned had had his shoulder half cut off with a hatchet; the man whose belly had been pierced was dying; and there was the officer who had been knocked down by Christophe. They were laid out by the hearth. The officer, who was the least injured of the three, had just opened his eyes. He took a long look at the ring of peasants leaning over him, a look filled with hatred. Hardly had he regained consciousness of what had happened than he began to abuse them. He swore that he would be avenged and would settle their hash, the whole lot of them; he choked with rage; it was palpable that if he could he would exterminate them. They tried to laugh, but their laughter was forced. A young peasant shouted to the wounded man: "Hold your gab or I'll kill you."

The officer tried to get up, and he glared at the man who had just spoken to him with blood-shot eyes:

"Swine!" he said. "Kill me! They'll cut your heads off."

He went on shouting. The man who had been ripped up screamed like a bleeding pig. The third was stiff and still like a dead man. A crushing terror came over the peasants. Lorchen and some women carried the wounded men to another room. The shouts of the officer and the screams of the dying man died away. The peasants were silent; they stood fixed in the circle as though the three bodies were still lying at their feet; they dared not budge and looked at each other in panic. At last Lorchen's father said:

"You have done a fine piece of work!"

There was an agonized murmuring; their throats were dry. Then they began all to talk at once. At first they whispered as though they were afraid of eavesdroppers, but soon they raised their voices and became more vehement; they accused each other; they blamed each other for the blows they had struck. The dispute became acrid; they seemed to be on the point of going for each other. Lorch-

en's father brought them to unanimity. With his arms folded he turned towards Christophe and jerked his chin at him:

"And," he said, "what business had this fellow here?"

The wrath of the rabble was turned on Christophe:

"True! True!" they cried. "He began it! But for him nothing would have happened."

Christophe was amazed. He tried to reply:

"You know perfectly that what I did was for you, not for myself."

But they replied furiously:

"Aren't we capable of defending ourselves? Do you think we need a gentleman from the town to tell us what we should do? Who asked your advice? And besides who asked you to come? Couldn't you stay at home?"

Christophe shrugged his shoulders and turned towards the door. But Lorchen's father barred the way, screaming:

"That's it! That's it!" he shouted. "He would like to cut away now after getting us all into a scrape. He shan't go!"

The peasants roared:

"He shan't go! He's the cause of it all. He shall pay for it all!"

They surrounded him and shook their fists at him. Christophe saw the circle of threatening faces closing in upon him; fear had infuriated them. He said nothing, made a face of disgust, threw his hat on the table, went and sat at the end of the room, and turned his back on them.

But Lorchen was angry and flung herself at the peasants. Her pretty face was red and scowling with rage. She pushed back the people who were crowding round Christophe:

"Cowards! Brute beasts!" she cried. "Aren't you ashamed? You want to pretend that he brought it all on you! As if they did not see you all! As if there was a single one of you who had not hit out his hand as he could! . . . If there had been a man who had stayed with his arms folded while the others were fighting I would spit in his face and call him: Coward! Coward! . . ."

The peasants, surprised by this unexpected outburst,

stayed for a moment in silence; they began to shout again:

"He began it! Nothing would have happened but for him."

In vain did Lorchen's father make signs to his daughter. She went on:

"Yes. He did begin it! That is nothing for you to boast about. But for him you would have let them insult you. You would have let them insult you. You cowards! You funks!"

She abused her partner:

"And you, you said nothing. Your heart was in your mouth; you held out your bottom to be kicked. You would have thanked them for it! Aren't you ashamed? . . . Aren't you all ashamed? You are not men! You're as brave as sheep with your noses to the ground all the time! He had to give you an example!—And now you want to make him bear everything? . . . Well, I tell you, that shan't happen! He fought for us. Either you save him or you'll suffer along with him. I give you my word for it!"

Lorchen's father caught her arm. He was beside himself and shouted:

"Shut up! Shut up! . . . Will you shut up, you bitch!"

But she thrust him away and went on again. The peasants yelled. She shouted louder than they in a shrill, piercing scream:

"What have you to say to it all? Do you think I did not see you just now kicking the man who is lying half dead in the next room? And you, show me your hands! . . . There's blood on them. Do you think I did not see you with your knife? I shall tell everything I saw if you do the least thing against him. I will have you all condemned."

The infuriated peasants thrust their faces into Lorchen's and bawled at her. One of them made as though to box her ears, but Lorchen's lover seized him by the scruff of the neck and they jostled each other and were on the point of coming to blows. An old man said to Lorchen:

"If we are condemned, you will be too."

"I shall be too," she said, "I am not so cowardly as you."

And she burst out again.

They did not know what to do. They turned to her father:

"Can't you make her be silent?"

The old man had understood that it was not wise to push Lorchen too far. He signed to them to be calm. Silence came. Lorchen went on talking alone; then as she found no response, like a fire without fuel, she stopped. After a moment her father coughed and said:

"Well, then, what do you want? You don't want to ruin us."

She said:

"I want him to be saved."

They began to think. Christophe had not moved from where he sat; he was stiff and proud and seemed not to understand that they were discussing him; but he was touched by Lorchen's intervention. Lorchen seemed not to be aware of his presence; she was leaning against the table by which he was sitting, and glaring defiantly at the peasants, who were smoking and looking down at the ground. At last her father chewed his pipe for a little and said:

"Whether we say anything or not,—if he stays he is done for. The sergeant major recognized him; he won't spare him. There is only one thing for him to do—to get away at once to the other side of the frontier."

He had come to the conclusion it would be better for them all if Christophe escaped; in that way he would admit his guilt, and when he was no longer there to defend himself it would not be difficult to put upon him the burden of the affair. The others agreed. They understood each other perfectly.—Now that they had come to a decision they were all in a hurry for Christophe to go. Without being in the least embarrassed by what they had been saying a moment before they came up to him and pretended to be deeply interested in his welfare.

"There is not a moment to lose, sir," said Lorchen's father. "They will come back. Half an hour to go to the fortress. Half an hour to come back. . . . There is only just time to slip away."

Christophe had risen. He too had been thinking. He

knew that if he stayed he was lost. But to go, to go without seeing his mother? . . . No. It was impossible. He said that he would first go back to the town and would still have time to go during the night and cross the frontier. But they protested loudly. They had barred the door just before to prevent his going; now they wanted to prevent his not going. If he went back to the town he was certain to be caught; they would know at the fortress before he got there; they would await him at home.—He insisted. Lorchen had understood him:

“You want to see your mother? . . . I will go instead of you.”

“When?”

“To-night.”

“Really! You will do that?”

“I will go.”

She took her shawl and put it round her head.

“Write a letter. I will take it to her. Come with me. I will give you some ink.”

She took him into the inner room. At the door she turned, and addressing her lover:

“And do you get ready,” she said. “You must take him. You must not leave him until you have seen him over the frontier.”

He was as eager as anybody to see Christophe over into France and farther if possible.

Lorchen went into the next room with Christophe. He was still hesitating. He was torn by grief at the thought that he would not be able to embrace his mother. When would he see her again? She was so old, so worn out, so lonely! This fresh blow would be too much for her. What would become of her without him? . . . But what would become of him if he stayed and were condemned and put in prison for years? Would not that even more certainly mean destitution and misery for her? If he were free, though far away, he could always help her, or she could come to him.—He had not time to see clearly in his mind. Lorchen took his hands—she stood near him and looked at him; their faces were almost touching; she threw her

arms round his neck and kissed his mouth:

"Quick! Quick!" she whispered, pointing to the table.

He gave up trying to think. He sat down. She tore a sheet of squared paper with red lines from an account book.

He wrote:

"MY DEAR MOTHER: Forgive me. I am going to hurt you much. I cannot do otherwise. I have done nothing wrong. But now I must fly and leave the country. The girl who brings you this letter will tell you everything. I wanted to say good-bye to you. They will not let me. They say that I should be arrested. I am so unhappy that I have no will left. I am going over the frontier but I shall stay near it until you have written to me; the girl who brings you my letter will bring me your reply. Tell me what to do. I will do whatever you say. Do you want me to come back? Tell me to come back! I cannot bear the idea of leaving you alone. What will you do to live? Forgive me! Forgive me! I love you and I kiss you . . ."

"Be quick, sir, or we shall be too late," said Lorchen's swain, pushing the door open.

Christophe wrote his name hurriedly and gave the letter to Lorchen.

"You will give it to her yourself?"

"I am going," she said.

She was already ready to go.

"To-morrow," she went on. "I will bring you her reply; you must wait for me at Leiden,—(the first station beyond the German frontier)—on the platform."

(She had read Christophe's letter over his shoulder as he wrote.)

"You will tell me everything and how she bore the blow and everything she says to you? You will not keep anything from me?" said Christophe beseechingly.

"I will tell you everything."

They were not so free to talk now, for the young man was at the door watching them:

"And then, Herr Christophe," said Lorchén, "I will go and see her sometimes and I will send you news of her; do not be anxious."

She shook hands with him vigorously like a man.

"Let us go!" said the peasant.

"Let us go!" said Christophe.

All three went out. On the road they parted. Lorchén went one way and Christophe, with his guide, the other. They did not speak. The crescent moon veiled in mists was disappearing behind the woods. A pale light hovered over the fields. In the hollows the mists had risen thick and milky white. The shivering trees were bathed in the moisture of the air.—They were not more than a few minutes gone from the village when the peasant flung back sharply and signed to Christophe to stop. They listened. On the road in front of them they heard the regular tramp of a troop of soldiers coming towards them. The peasant climbed the hedge into the fields. Christophe followed him. They walked away across the plowed fields. They heard the soldiers go by on the road. In the darkness the peasant shook his fist at them. Christophe's heart stopped like a hunted animal that hears the baying of the hounds. They returned to the road again, avoiding the villages and isolated farms where the barking of the dogs betrayed them to the countryside. On the slope of a wooded hill they saw in the distance the red lights of the railway. They took the direction of the signals and decided to go to the first station. It was not easy. As they came down into the valley they plunged into the fog. They had to jump a few streams. Soon they found themselves in immense fields of beetroot and plowed land; they thought they would never be through. The plain was uneven; there were little rises and hollows into which they were always in danger of falling. At last after walking blindly through the fog they saw suddenly a few yards away the signal light of the railway at the top of an embankment. They climbed the bank. At the risk of being run over they followed the rails until they were within a hundred yards of the station; then they took to the road again. They reached the station twenty minutes

before the train went. In spite of Lorchen's orders the peasant left Christophe; he was in a hurry to go back to see what had happened to the others and to his own property.

Christophe took a ticket for Leiden and waited alone in the empty third-class waiting room. An official who was asleep on a seat came and looked at Christophe's ticket and opened the door for him when the train came in. There was nobody in the carriage. Everybody in the train was asleep. In the fields all was asleep. Only Christophe did not sleep in spite of his weariness. As the heavy iron wheels approached the frontier he felt a fearful longing to be out of reach. In an hour he would be free. But till then a word would be enough to have him arrested. . . . Arrested! His whole being revolted at the word. To be stifled by odious force! . . . He could not breathe. His mother, his country, that he was leaving, were no longer in his thoughts. In the egoism of his threatened liberty he thought only of that liberty of his life which he wished to save. Whatever it might cost! Even at the cost of crime. He was bitterly sorry that he had taken the train instead of continuing the journey to the frontier on foot. He had wanted to gain a few hours. A fine gain! He was throwing himself into the jaws of the wolf. Surely they were waiting for him at the frontier station; orders must have been given; he would be arrested. . . . He thought for a moment of leaving the train while it was moving, before it reached the station; he even opened the door of the carriage, but it was too late; the train was at the station. It stopped. Five minutes. An eternity. Christophe withdrew to the end of the compartment and hid behind the curtain and anxiously watched the platform on which a gendarme was standing motionless. The station master came out of his office with a telegram in his hand and went hurriedly up to the gendarme. Christophe had no doubt that it was about himself. He looked for a weapon. He had only a strong knife with two blades. He opened it in his pocket. An official with a lamp on his chest had passed the station master and was running along the train. Christophe saw him coming. His fist closed on

the handle of the knife in his pocket and he thought:

"I am lost."

He was in such a state of excitement that he would have been capable of plunging the knife into the man's breast if he had been unfortunate enough to come straight to him and open his compartment. But the official stopped at the next carriage to look at the ticket of a passenger who had just taken his seat. The train moved on again. Christophe repressed the throbbing of his heart. He did not stir. He dared hardly say to himself that he was saved. He would not say it until he had crossed the frontier. . . . Day was beginning to dawn. The silhouettes of the trees were starting out of the night. A carriage was passing on the road like a fantastic shadow with a jingle of bells and a winking eye. . . . With his face close pressed to the window Christophe tried to see the post with the imperial arms which marked the bounds of his servitude. He was still looking for it in the growing light when the train whistled to announce its arrival at the first Belgian station.

He got up, opened the door wide, and drank in the icy air. Free! His whole life before him! The joy of life! . . . And at once there came upon him suddenly all the sadness of what he was leaving, all the sadness of what he was going to meet; and he was overwhelmed by the fatigue of that night of emotion. He sank down on the seat. He had hardly been in the station a minute. When a minute later an official opened the door of the carriage he found Christophe asleep. Christophe awoke, dazed, thinking he had been asleep an hour; he got out heavily and dragged himself to the customs, and when he was definitely accepted on foreign territory, having no more to defend himself, he lay down along a seat in the waiting room, and dropped off and slept like a log.

He awoke about noon. Lorchén could hardly come before two or three o'clock. After a grim time of waiting the train at last appeared. Christophe expected to see Lorchén's bold face in the train; for he was sure she would keep her promise; but she did not appear. He ran anxiously

from one compartment to another; he said to himself that if she had been in the train she would have been one of the first to get out. As he was plunging through the stream of passengers coming from the opposite direction he saw a face which he seemed to know. It was the face of a little girl of thirteen or fourteen, chubby, dimpled, and ruddy as an apple, with a little turned-up nose and a large mouth, and a thick plait coiled around her head. As he looked more closely at her he saw that she had in her hand an old valise very much like his own. She was watching him too like a sparrow; and when she saw that he was looking at her she came towards him; but she stood firmly in front of Christophe and stared at him with her little mouselike eyes, without speaking a word. Christophe knew her; she was a little milkmaid at Lorchen's farm. Pointing to the valise he said:

"That is mine, isn't it?"

The girl did not move and replied cunningly:

"I'm not sure. Where do you come from, first of all?"

"Buir."

"And who sent it you?"

"Lorchen. Come. Give it me."

The little girl held out the valise.

"There it is."

And she added:

"Oh! But I knew you at once!"

"What were you waiting for then?"

"I was waiting for you to tell me that it was you."

"And Lorchen?" asked Christophe. "Why didn't she come?"

The girl did not reply. Christophe understood that she did not want to say anything among all the people. They had first to pass through the customs. When that was done Christophe took the girl to the end of the platform:

"The police came," said the girl, now very talkative. "They came almost as soon as you had gone. They went into all the houses. They questioned everybody, and they arrested big Sami and Christian and old Kaspar. And also Mélanie and Gertrude, though they declared they had done

nothing, and they wept; and Gertrude scratched the gendarmes. It was not any good then saying that you had done it all."

"I?" exclaimed Christophe.

"Oh! yes," said the girl quietly. "It was no good as you had gone. Then they looked for you everywhere and hunted for you in every direction."

"And Lorchen?"

"Lorchen was not there. She came back afterwards after she had been to the town."

"Did she see my mother?"

"Yes. Here is the letter. And she wanted to come herself, but she was arrested too."

"How did you manage to come?"

"Well, she came back to the village without being seen by the police, and she was going to set out again. But Irmina, Gertrude's sister, denounced her. They came to arrest her. Then when she saw the gendarmes coming she went up to her room and shouted that she would come down in a minute, that she was dressing. I was in the vineyard behind the house; she called to me from the window: 'Lydia! Lydia!' I went to her; she threw down your valise and the letter which your mother had given her, and she explained where I should find you. I ran, and here I am."

"Didn't she say anything more?"

"Yes. She told me to give you this shawl to show you that I came from her."

Christophe recognized the white shawl with red spots and embroidered flowers which Lorchen had tied round her head when she left him on the night before. The naïve improbability of the excuse she had made for sending him such a love-token did not make him smile.

"Now," said the girl, "here is the return train. I must go home. Good-night."

"Wait," said Christophe. "And the fare, what did you do about that?"

"Lorchen gave it me."

"Take this," said Christophe, pressing a few pieces of money into her hand.

He held her back as she was trying to go.

"And then . . ." he said.

He stooped and kissed her cheeks. The girl affected to protest.

"Don't mind," said Christophe jokingly. "It was not for you."

"Oh! I know that," said the girl mockingly. "It was for Lorchén."

It was not only Lorchén that Christophe kissed as he kissed the little milkmaid's chubby cheeks; it was all Germany.

The girl slipped away and ran towards the train which was just going. She hung out of the window and waved her handkerchief to him until she was out of sight. He followed with his eyes the rustic messenger who had brought him for the last time the breath of his country and of those he loved.

When she had gone he found himself utterly alone, this time, a stranger in a strange land. He had in his hand his mother's letter and the shawl love-token. He pressed the shawl to his breast and tried to open the letter. But his hands trembled. What would he find in it? What suffering would be written in it?—No; he could not bear the sorrowful words of reproach which already he seemed to hear; he would retrace his steps.

At last he unfolded the letter and read: "My poor child, do not be anxious about me. I will be wise. God has punished me. I must not be selfish and keep you here. Go to Paris. Perhaps it will be better for you. Do not worry about me. I can manage somehow. The chief thing is that you should be happy. I kiss you. MOTHER.

"Write to me when you can."

Christophe sat down on his valise and wept.

The porter was shouting the train for Paris.

The heavy train was slowing down with a terrific noise. Christophe dried his tears, got up and said:

"I must go."

He looked at the sky in the direction in which Paris must be. The sky, dark everywhere, was even darker there. It was like a dark chasm. Christophe's heart ached, but he said again:

"I must go."

He climbed into the train and leaning out of the window went on looking at the menacing horizon:

"O, Paris!" he thought, "Paris! Come to my aid! Save me! Save my thoughts!"

The thick fog grew denser still. Behind Christophe, above the country he was leaving, a little patch of sky, pale blue, large, like two eyes, smiled sorrowfully through the heavy veil of clouds and then was gone. The train departed. Rain fell. Night fell.

BOOK TWO

Jean-Christophe in Paris

THE MARKET-PLACE

I

Disorder in order. Untidy officials offhanded in manner. Travelers protesting against the rules and regulations, to which they submitted all the same. Christophe was in France.

After having satisfied the curiosity of the customs, he took his seat again in the train for Paris. Night was over the fields that were soaked with the rain. The hard lights of the stations accentuated the sadness of the interminable plain buried in darkness. The trains, more and more numerous, that passed, rent the air with their shrieking whistles, which broke upon the torpor of the sleeping passengers. The train was nearing Paris.

Christophe was ready to get out an hour before they ran in; he had jammed his hat down on his head; he had buttoned his coat up to his neck for fear of the robbers, with whom he had been told Paris was infested; twenty times he had got up and sat down; twenty times he had moved his bag from the rack to the seat, from the seat to the rack, to the exasperation of his fellow-passengers, against whom he knocked every time with his usual clumsiness.

Just as they were about to run into the station the train suddenly stopped in the darkness. Christophe flattened his nose against the window and tried vainly to look out. He turned toward his fellow-travelers, hoping to find a friendly glance which would encourage him to ask where they were. But they were all asleep or pretending to be so: they were bored and scowling: not one of them made any attempt to discover why they had stopped. Christophe was surprised

by their indifference: these stiff, somnolent creatures were so utterly unlike the French of his imagination! At last he sat down, discouraged, on his bag, rocking with every jolt of the train, and in his turn he was just dozing off when he was roused by the noise of the doors being opened. . . . Paris! . . . His fellow-travelers were already getting out.

Jostling and jostled, he walked towards the exit of the station, refusing the porter who offered to carry his bag. With a peasant's suspiciousness he thought every one was going to rob him. He lifted his precious bag on to his shoulder and walked straight ahead, indifferent to the curses of the people as he forced his way through them. At last he found himself in the greasy streets of Paris.

He was too much taken up with the business in hand, the finding of lodgings, and too weary of the whirl of carriages into which he was swept, to think of looking at anything. The first thing was to look for a room. There was no lack of hotels: the station was surrounded with them on all sides: their names were flaring in gas letters. Christophe wanted to find a less dazzling place than any of these: none of them seemed to him to be humble enough for his purse. At last in a side street he saw a dirty inn with a cheap eating-house on the ground floor. It was called *Hôtel de la Civilisation*. A fat man in his shirt-sleeves was sitting smoking at a table: he hurried forward as he saw Christophe enter. He could not understand a word of his jargon: but at the first glance he marked and judged the awkward childish German, who refused to let his bag out of his hands, and struggled hard to make himself understood in an incredible language. He took him up an evil-smelling staircase to an airless room which opened on to a closed court. He vaunted the quietness of the room, to which no noise from outside could penetrate: and he asked a good price for it. Christophe only half understood him; knowing nothing of the conditions of life in Paris, and with his shoulder aching with the weight of his bag, he accepted everything: he was eager to be alone. But hardly was he

left alone when he was struck by the dirtiness of it all. He tried hard not to see and not to feel, so as to escape disgust.

He was empty, and his eyes were burning: he was aching body and soul as he sank down into a chair in the corner of the room: he stayed like that for a couple of hours and could not stir. At last he wrenched himself out of his apathy and went to bed. He fell into a fevered slumber, from which he awoke every few minutes, feeling that he had been asleep for hours. The room was stifling: he was burning from head to foot: he was horribly thirsty: he suffered from ridiculous nightmares, which clung to him even after he had opened his eyes: sharp pains thudded in him like the blows of a hammer. In the middle of the night he awoke, overwhelmed by despair, so profound that he all but cried out: he stuffed the bedclothes into his mouth so as not to be heard: he felt that he was going mad. He sat up in bed, and struck a light. He was bathed in sweat. He got up, opened his bag to look for a handkerchief. He laid his hand on an old Bible, which his mother had hidden in his linen. Christophe had never read much of the Book: but it was a comfort beyond words for him to find it at that moment. The Bible had belonged to his grandfather and to his grandfather's father. The heads of the family had inscribed on a blank page at the end their names and the important dates of their lives—births, marriages, deaths. His grandfather had written in pencil, in his large hand, the dates when he had read and re-read each chapter: the Book was full of tags of yellowed paper, on which the old man had jotted down his simple thoughts. The Book used to rest on a shelf above his bed, and he used often to take it down during the long, sleepless nights and hold converse with it rather than read it. It had been with him to the hour of his death, as it had been with his father. A century of the joys and sorrows of the family was breathed forth from the pages of the Book. Holding it in his hands, Christophe felt less lonely.

He opened it at the most somber words of all:

Is there not an appointed time to man upon earth? Are not his days also like the days of an hireling?

When I lie down, I say, When shall I arise and the night be gone? and I am full of tossings to and fro unto the dawn of the day.

When I say, My bed shall comfort me, my couch shall ease my complaint, then Thou searest me with dreams and terrifiest me through visions. . . . How long wilt Thou not depart from me, nor let me alone till I swallow down my spittle? I have sinned; what shall I do unto Thee, Oh Thou preserver of men?

Though He slay me yet will I trust in Him.

All greatness is good, and the height of sorrow tops deliverance. What casts down and overwhelms and blasts the soul beyond all hope is mediocrity in sorrow and joy, selfish and niggardly suffering that has not the strength to be rid of the lost pleasure, and in secret lends itself to every sort of degradation to steal pleasure anew. Christophe was braced up by the bitter savor that he found in the old Book: the wind of Sinai coming from vast and lonely spaces and the mighty sea to sweep away the steamy vapors. The fever in Christophe subsided. He was calm again, and lay down and slept peacefully until the morrow. When he opened his eyes again it was day. More acutely than ever he was conscious of the horror of his room: he felt his loneliness and wretchedness: but he faced them. He was no longer disheartened: he was left only with a sturdy melancholy. He read over now the words of Job:

Even though God slay me yet would I trust in Him.

He got up. He was ready calmly to face the fight.

He made up his mind there and then to set to work. He knew only one person in Paris: a young Jew from Mainz, Sylvain Kohn, who had a post in a great publishing house, the address of which Christophe did not know.

Sylvain Kohn and Christophe had been at school together, where the young monkey had played many pranks on Christophe, who thrashed him for it when he saw the trap into which he had fallen. Kohn did not put up a fight:

he let Christophe knock him down and rub his face in the dust, while he howled; but he would begin again at once with a malice that never tired—until the day when he became really afraid, Christophe having seriously threatened to kill him.

He made sure of the address, and went to hunt up Kohn. The publishing house was in the neighborhood of the Madeleine. Christophe went up to a room on the second floor, and asked for Sylvain Kohn. A man in livery told him that "Kohn was not known." Christophe was taken aback, and thought his pronunciation must be at fault, and he repeated his question: but the man listened attentively, and repeated that no one of that name was known in the place. Quite out of countenance, Christophe begged pardon, and was turning to go when a door at the end of the corridor opened, and he saw Kohn himself showing a lady out. His first thought was that Kohn had seen him, and had given orders to the man to say that he was not there. His gorge rose at the impudence of it. He was on the point of going in a huff, when he heard his name: Kohn, with his sharp eyes, had recognized him: and he ran up to him, with a smile on his lips, and his hands held out with every mark of extraordinary delight.

Sylvain Kohn was short, thick-set, clean-shaven, like an American; his complexion was too red, his hair too black; he had a heavy, massive face, coarse-featured. He was modishly dressed, trying to cover up the defects of his figure, high shoulders, and wide hips. That was the only thing that touched his vanity: he would gladly have put up with any insult if only he could have been a few inches taller and of a better figure. For the rest, he was very well pleased with himself.

"Ah! What a surprise!" he cried gaily, taking Christophe's hands in his own clumsy paws, with their stubby fingers that looked as though they were crammed into too tight a skin. He could not let go of Christophe's hands. It was as though he were encountering his best friend. Christophe was so staggered that he wondered again if Kohn was not making fun of him. But Kohn was doing nothing of

the kind—or, rather, if he was joking, it was no more than usual. There was no rancor about Kohn: he was too clever for that. He had long ago forgotten the rough treatment he had suffered at Christophe's hands: and if ever he did remember it, it did not worry him. He was delighted to have the opportunity of showing his old schoolfellow his importance and his new duties, and the elegance of his Parisian manners. He was not lying in expressing his surprise: a visit from Christophe was the last thing in the world that he expected: and if he was too worldly-wise not to know that the visit was of set material purpose, he took it as a reason the more for welcoming him, as it was, in fact, a tribute to his power.

"And you have come from Germany? How is your mother?" he asked, with a familiarity which at any other time would have annoyed Christophe, but now gave him comfort in the strange city.

"But how was it," asked Christophe, who was still inclined to be suspicious, "that they told me just now that Herr Kohn did not belong here?"

"Herr Kohn doesn't belong here," said Sylvain Kohn, laughing. "My name isn't Kohn now. My name is Hamilton."

Kohn plied Christophe with questions. He asked about all the people at home, and what had become of so-and-so, pluming himself on the fact that he remembered everybody. Christophe had forgotten his antipathy; he replied cordially and gratefully, giving a mass of detail about which Kohn cared nothing at all. To put a stop to it, Kohn asked:

"But how the devil do you come here?"

"Ah!" thought Christophe, "he doesn't know. That is why he was so amiable. He'll be different when he knows."

He made it a point of honor to tell everything against himself: the brawl with the soldiers, the warrant out against him, his flight from the country.

Kohn rocked with laughter.

"Bravo!" he cried. "Bravo! That's a good story!"

He shook Christophe's hand warmly. He was delighted

by any smack in the eye of authority: and the story tickled him the more as he knew the heroes of it: he saw the funny side of it.

Christophe put forward his request:

"You see how I am placed. I came here to look for work—music lessons—until I can make my name. Could you speak for me?"

"Certainly," said Kohn. "To any one you like. I know everybody here. I'm at your service. I've got an idea. Would you care to do some work for a music publisher?"

Christophe accepted eagerly.

"I've got the very thing," said Kohn. "I know one of the partners in a big firm of music publishers—Daniel Hecht. I'll introduce you. You'll see what there is to do. I don't know anything about it, you know. But Hecht is a real musician. You'll get on with him all right."

Next day Christophe fetched Kohn at his office. On his advice, he had brought several of his compositions to show to Hecht. They found him in his music-shop near the Opéra. Hecht did not put himself out when they went in: he coldly held out two fingers to take Kohn's hand, did not reply to Christophe's ceremonious bow, and at Kohn's request he took them into the next room. He did not ask them to sit down. He stood with his back to the empty chimney-place, and stared at the wall.

Daniel Hecht was a man of forty, tall, cold, correctly dressed, a marked Phenician type; he looked clever and disagreeable: there was a scowl on his face: he had black hair and a beard like that of an Assyrian King, long and square-cut. He hardly ever looked straight forward, and he had an icy brutal way of talking which sounded insulting even when he only said "Good-day." His insolence was more apparent than real. No doubt it emanated from a contemptuous strain in his character: but really it was more a part of the automatic and formal element in him.

Sylvain Kohn introduced his protégé, in a bantering, pretentious voice, with exaggerated praises. Christophe was abashed by his reception, and stood shifting from one foot

to the other, holding his manuscripts and his hat in his hand. When Kohn had finished, Hecht, who up to then had seemed to be unaware of Christophe's existence, turned towards him disdainfully, and, without looking at him, said:

"Krafft . . . Christophe Krafft. . . . Never heard the name."

To Christophe it was as though he had been struck, full in the chest. The blood rushed to his cheeks. He replied angrily:

"You'll hear it later on."

Hecht took no notice, and went on imperturbably, as though Christophe did not exist:

"Krafft . . . no, never heard it."

He was one of those people for whom not to be known to them is a mark against a man.

He went on in German:

"And you come from the *Rhine-land*? . . . It's wonderful how many people there are there who dabble in music! But I don't think there is a man among them who has any claim to be a musician."

He meant it as a joke, not as an insult: but Christophe did not take it so. He would have replied in kind if Kohn had not anticipated him.

"Oh, come, come!" he said to Hecht. "You must do me the justice to admit that I know nothing at all about it."

"That's to your credit," replied Hecht.

"If I am to be no musician in order to please you," said Christophe dryly, "I am sorry, but I'm not that."

Hecht, still looking aside, went on, as indifferently as ever.

"You have written music? What have you written? *Lieder*, I suppose?"

"*Lieder*, two symphonies, symphonic poems, quartets, piano suites, theater music," said Christophe, boiling.

"People write a great deal in Germany," said Hecht, with scornful politeness.

It made him all the more suspicious of the newcomer to

think that he had written so many works, and that he, Daniel Hecht, had not heard of them.

"Well," he said, "I might perhaps find work for you as you are recommended by my friend Hamilton. At present we are making a collection, a 'Library for Young People,' in which we are publishing some easy pianoforte pieces. Could you 'simplify' the *Carnival* of Schumann, and arrange it for six and eight hands?"

Christophe was staggered.

"And you offer that to me, to me—me . . . ?"

His naïve "Me" delighted Kohn: but Hecht was offended.

"I don't see that there is anything surprising in that," he said. "It is not such easy work as all that! If you think it too easy, so much the better. We'll see about that later on. You tell me you are a good musician. I must believe you. But I've never heard of you."

He thought to himself:

"If one were to believe all these young sparks, they would knock the stuffing out of Johannes Brahms himself."

Christophe made no reply—(for he had vowed to hold himself in check)—clapped his hat on his head, and turned towards the door. Kohn stopped him, laughing:

"Wait, wait!" he said. And he turned to Hecht: "He has brought some of his work to give you an idea."

"Ah!" said Hecht warily. "Very well, then: let us see them."

Without a word Christophe held out his manuscripts. Hecht cast his eyes over them carelessly.

"What's this? *A suite for piano* . . . (reading): *A Day*. . . Ah! Always program music! . . ."

In spite of his apparent indifference he was reading carefully. He was an excellent musician, and knew his job: he knew nothing outside it: with the first bar or two he gauged his man. He was silent as he turned over the pages with a scornful air: he was struck by the talent revealed in them: but his natural reserve and his vanity, piqued by Christophe's manner, kept him from showing anything. He went on to the end in silence, not missing a note.

"Yes," he said, in a patronizing tone of voice, "they're well enough."

Violent criticism would have hurt Christophe less.

"I don't need to be told that," he said irritably.

"I fancy," said Hecht, "that you showed me them for me to say what I thought."

"Not at all."

"Then," said Hecht coldly, "I fail to see what you have come for."

"I came to ask for work, and nothing else."

"I have nothing to offer you for the time being, except what I told you. And I'm not sure of that. I said it was possible, that's all."

"And you have no other work to offer a musician like myself?"

"A musician like you?" said Hecht ironically and cuttingly. "Other musicians at least as good as yourself have not thought the work beneath their dignity. There are men whose names I could give you, men who are now very well known in Paris, have been very grateful to me for it."

"Then they must have been—swine!" bellowed Christophe. "You are wrong if you think you have to do with a man of that kidney. Do you think you can take me in with looking anywhere but at me, and clipping your words? You didn't even deign to acknowledge my bow when I came in. . . . But what the hell are you to treat me like that? Are you even a musician? Have you ever written anything? . . . And you pretend to teach me how to write—me, to whom writing is life! . . . And you can find nothing better to offer me, when you have read my music, than a hashing up of great musicians, a filthy scrabbling over their works to turn them into parlor tricks for little girls! . . . You go to your Parisians who are rotten enough to be taught their work by you! I'd rather die first!"

It was impossible to stem the torrent of his words.

Hecht said icily:

"Take it or leave it."

Christophe went out and slammed the doors. Hecht shrugged, and said to Sylvain Kohn, who was laughing:

"He will come to it like the rest."

At heart he valued Christophe. He was clever enough to feel not only the worth of a piece of work, but also the worth of a man. Behind Christophe's outburst he had marked a force. And he knew its rarity—in the world of art more than anywhere else. But his vanity was ruffled by it: nothing would ever induce him to admit himself in the wrong. He desired loyally to be just to Christophe, but he could not do it unless Christophe came and groveled to him. He expected Christophe to return: his melancholy skepticism and his experience of men had told him how inevitably the will is weakened and worn down by poverty.

Christophe went home. Anger had given place to despair. He felt that he was lost. The frail prop on which he had counted had failed him. He had no doubt but that he had made a deadly enemy, not only of Hecht, but of Kohn, who had introduced him. He was in absolute solitude in a hostile city. Outside Kohn he knew no one. His friend Corinne, the beautiful actress whom he had met in Germany, was not in Paris: she was still touring abroad, in America, this time on her own account: the papers published clamatory descriptions of her travels. As for the little French governess whom he had unwittingly robbed of her situation,—the thought of her had long filled him with remorse—how often had he vowed that he would find her when he reached Paris. But now that he was in Paris he found that he had forgotten one important thing: her name. He could not remember it. He could only recollect her Christian name: Antoinette. And then, even if he remembered, how was he to find a poor little governess in that ant-heap of human beings?

Christophe made fresh advances to the music-vendors: but in vain. He found the French lacking in cordiality: and the whirl and confusion of their perpetual agitation crushed him. They seemed to him to live in a state of anarchy, directed by a cunning and despotic bureaucracy.

One evening, he was wandering along the boulevards, discouraged by the futility of his efforts, when he saw Sylvain

Kohn coming from the opposite direction. He was convinced that they had quarreled irrevocably and looked away and tried to pass unnoticed. But Kohn called to him:

"What became of you after that great day?" he asked with a laugh. "I've been wanting to look you up, but I lost your address. . . . Good Lord, my dear fellow, I didn't know you! You were epic: that's what you were, epic!"

Christophe stared at him. He was surprised and a little ashamed.

"You're not angry with me?"

"Angry? What an idea!"

So far from being angry, he had been delighted with the way in which Christophe had trounced Hecht: it had been a treat to him. It really mattered nothing to him whether Christophe or Hecht was right: he only regarded people as source of entertainment: and he saw in Christophe a spring of high comedy, which he intended to exploit to the full.

From that day on Sylvain Kohn took to inviting Christophe to his rooms, and put at his disposal his excellent piano, which he never used himself. Christophe, who was bursting with suppressed music, did not need to be urged, and accepted: and for a time he made good use of the invitation.

At first all went well. Christophe was only too happy to play: and Sylvain Kohn was tactful enough to leave him to play in peace. He enjoyed it thoroughly himself. By one of those queer phenomena which must be in everybody's observation, the man, who was no musician, no artist, cold-hearted and devoid of all poetic feeling and real kindness, was enslaved sensually by Christophe's music, which he did not understand, though he found in it a strongly voluptuous pleasure. Unfortunately, he could not hold his tongue. He had to talk, loudly, while Christophe was playing. He had to underline the music with affected exclamations, like a concert snob, or else he passed ridiculous comment on it. Then Christophe would thump the piano, and declare that he could not go on like that. Kohn would try hard to be silent: but he could not do it: at once he would begin again to sniffle, sigh, whistle, beat time, hum, imitate the various

instruments. And when the piece was ended he would have burst if he had not given Christophe the benefit of his inept comment.

That would not have mattered much if Kohn had been able to refrain from inviting his friends to hear Christophe. But he could not help wanting to show off his musician. The first time Christophe found in Kohn's rooms three or four people and Kohn's mistress—a large florid woman, all paint and powder, who repeated idiotic jokes and talked about her food, and thought herself a musician because she showed her legs every evening in the *Revue* of the *Variétés*—Christophe looked black. Next time he told Sylvain Kohn curtly that he would never again play in his rooms. Sylvain Kohn swore by all his gods that he would not invite anybody again. But he did so by stealth, and hid his guests in the next room. Naturally, Christophe found that out, and went away in a fury, and this time did not return.

And yet he had to accommodate Kohn, who had introduced him to various cosmopolitan families, and found him pupils.

Among the few girls whom Christophe taught, was the daughter of a rich motorcar manufacturer, Colette Stevens. Her father was a Belgian, a naturalized Frenchman, the son of an Anglo-American settled at Antwerp, and a Dutch-woman. Her mother was an Italian. A regular Parisian family. To Christophe—and to many others—Colette Stevens was the type of French girl.

She was eighteen, and had velvety, soft black eyes, which she used skilfully upon young men—regular Spanish eyes, with enormous pupils; a rather long and fantastic nose, which wrinkled up and moved at the tip as she talked, with little fractious pouts and shrugs; rebellious hair; a pretty little face; rather sallow complexion, dabbed with powder; heavy, rather thick features: altogether she was like a plump kitten.

She was slight, very well dressed, attractive, provoking: she had sly, affected, rather silly manners: her pose was that of a little girl, and she would sit rocking her chair for

hours at a time, and giving little exclamations like: "No? Impossible. . . ."

At meals she would clap her hands when there was a dish she loved: in the drawing-room she would smoke cigarette after cigarette, and, when there were men present, display an exuberant affection for her girl-friends, flinging her arms round their necks, kissing their hands, whispering in their ears, making ingenuous and naughty remarks, doing it most brilliantly, in a soft, twittering voice; and in the lightest possible way she would say improper things, without seeming to do more than hint at them, and was even more skilful in provoking them from others; she had the ingenuous air of a little girl, who knows perfectly well what she is about, with her large brilliant eyes, slyly and voluptuously looking sidelong, maliciously taking in all the gossip, and catching at all the dubious remarks of the conversation, and all the time angling for hearts.

All these tricks and shows, and her sophisticated ingenuity, were not at all to Christophe's liking. He had better things to do than to lend himself to the practices of an artful little girl, and did not even care to look on at them for his amusement. He had to earn his living, to keep his life and ideas from death. He had no interest in these drawing-room parakeets beyond the gaining of a livelihood. In return for their money, he gave them lessons, conscientiously concentrating all his energies on the task, to keep the boredom of it from mastering him, and his attention from being distracted by the tricks of his pupils when they were coquettes, like Colette Stevens. He paid no more attention to her than to Colette's little cousin, a child of twelve, shy and silent, whom the Stevens had adopted, to whom also Christophe gave lessons on the piano.

But Colette was too clever not to feel that all her charms were lost on Christophe, and too adroit not to adapt herself at once to his character. She did not even need to do so deliberately. It was a natural instinct with her. She was a woman. She was like water, formless. The soul of every man she met was a vessel, whose form she took immediately out of curiosity. It was a law of her existence that she

should always be some one else. Her whole personality was for ever shifting. She was for ever changing her vessel.

Christophe attracted her for many reasons, the chief of which was that he was not attracted by her. He attracted her also because he was different from all the young men of her acquaintance: she had never tried to pour herself into a vessel of such a rugged form. And, finally, he attracted her, because, being naturally and by inheritance expert in the valuation at the first glance of men and vessels, she knew perfectly well that what he lacked in polish Christophe made up in a solidity of character which none of her smart young Parisians could offer her.

Colette seemed to take a delight in gathering round herself all the young men who were most likely to exasperate Christophe: disgusting little snobs, most of them wealthy, all of them idle, or jobbed into a sinecure in some government office—which amounts to the same thing. They all wrote—or pretended to write. That was an itch of the Third Republic. It was a sort of indolent vanity,—intellectual work being the hardest of all to control, and most easily lending itself to the game of bluff. They never gave more than a discreet, though respectful hint, of their great labors. They seemed to be convinced of the importance of their work, staggering under the weight of it. At first Christophe was a little embarrassed by the fact that he had never heard of them or their works.

One evening he met at the Stevens' a Socialist deputy. Achille Roussin was a handsome man, with a fair beard, a burring way of talking, a florid complexion, affable manners, a certain polish on his fundamental vulgarity, certain peasant tricks which from time to time he used in spite of himself:—a way of paring his nails in public, a vulgar habit of catching hold of the coat of the man he was talking to, or gripping him by the arm:—he was a great eater, a heavy drinker, a high liver with a gift of laughter, and the appetite of a man of the people pushing his way into power: he was adaptable, quick to alter his manners to sort with his surroundings and the person he was talking to, full of ideas, and reasonable in expounding them, able to listen,

and to assimilate at once everything he heard: for the rest he was sympathetic, intelligent, interested in everything, naturally, or as a matter of acquired habit, or merely out of vanity: he was honest so far as was compatible with his interests, or when it was dangerous not to be so.

He had quite a pretty wife, tall, well made, and well set up, with a charming figure which was a little too much shown off by her tight dresses. She came of a rich shopkeeping family, broad-minded and virtuous, and she was devoted to the countless duties of society, as to a religion; not to mention the duties, social and artistic, which she imposed on herself: she had her *salon*, dabbled in University Extension movements, and was busy with philanthropic undertakings and researches into the psychology of childhood,—all without any enthusiasm or profound interest,—from a mixture of natural kindness, snobbishness, and the harmless pedantry of a young woman of education, who always seems to be repeating a lesson, and taking a pride in showing that she has learned it well.

Roussin loved music, as he loved the other arts, crudely but sincerely. When he liked a symphony, it became a thing that he could take into his arms. He had a superficial culture and turned it to good account: his wife had been useful to him there. He was interested in Christophe because he saw in him a vigorous vulgarian such as he was himself. And he found it absorbing to study an original of his stamp—(he was unwearying in his observation of humanity)—and to discover his impressions of Paris. The frankness and rudeness of Christophe's remarks amused him. He was skeptic enough to admit their truth. He was not put out by the fact that Christophe was a German. On the contrary: he prided himself on being above national prejudice. And, when all was said and done, he was sincerely "human"—(that was his chief quality);—he sympathized with everything human. But that did not prevent his being quite convinced of the superiority of the French—an old race, and an old civilization—over the Germans, and making fun of the Germans.

II

Without any deliberate effort on his part, Christophe had gained a certain celebrity in the Parisian circles to which he had been introduced by Sylvain Kohn. He was seen everywhere with one or other of his friends at first nights, and at concerts, and his extraordinary face, his ugliness, the absurdity of his figure and costume, his brusque, awkward manners, the paradoxical opinions to which he gave vent from time to time, his undeveloped, but large and healthy intellect, and the romantic stories spread by Sylvain Kohn about his escapades in Germany, and his complications with the police and flight to France, had marked him out for the idle, restless curiosity of the great cosmopolitan hotel drawing-room that Paris has become. As long as he held himself in check, observing, listening, and trying to understand before expressing any opinion, as long as nothing was known of his work or what he really thought, he was tolerated. The French were pleased with him for having been unable to stay in Germany. And the French musicians especially were delighted with Christophe's unjust pronouncements on German music, and took them all as homage to themselves:—(as a matter of fact, they heard only his old youthful opinions, to many of which he would no longer have subscribed: a few articles published in a German Review which had been amplified and circulated by Sylvain Kohn).—Christophe was interesting and did not interfere with anybody: there was no danger of his supplanting anybody. He needed only to become the great man of a coterie. He needed only not to write anything, or as little as possible, and not to have anything performed.

Christophe was then attracted by the dramatic form. Among the visions which had been floating before his mind for some months past were certain figures from the Bible.—That Bible, which his mother had given him as a companion in his exile, had been a source of dreams to him. Al-

though he did not read it in any religious spirit, the moral, or, rather, vital energy of that Hebraic Iliad had been to him a spring in which, in the evenings, he washed his naked soul of the smoke and mud of Paris. He was concerned with the sacred meaning of the book: but it was not the less a sacred book to him, for the breath of savage nature and primitive individualities that he found in its pages. He drew in its hymns of the earth, consumed with faith, quivering mountains, exultant skies, and human lions.

One of the characters in the book for whom he had an especial tenderness was the young David. He did not give him the ironic smile of the Florentine boy, or the tragic intensity of the sublime works of Michael Angelo and Verrochio: he knew them not. His David was a young shepherd-poet, with a virgin soul, in which heroism slumbered, a Siegfried of the South, of a finer race, and more beautiful, and of greater harmony in mind and body.

He had endeavored to recreate certain episodes of the youth of David: the meeting with Saul, the fight with Goliath: and he had written the first scene. He had conceived it as a symphonic picture with two characters.

On a deserted plateau, on a moor covered with heather in bloom, the young shepherd lay dreaming in the sun. The serene light, the hum and buzz of tiny creatures, the sweet whispering of the waving grass, the silvery tinkling of the grazing sheep, the mighty beat and rhythm of the earth sang through the dreaming boy unconscious of his divine destiny. Drowsing, his voice and the notes of his flute joined the harmonious silence: and his song was so calmly, so limpidly joyous, that, hearing it, there could be no thought of joy or sorrow, only the feeling that it must be so and could not be otherwise.—Suddenly over the moor reached great shadows: the air was still: life seemed to withdraw into the veins of the earth. Only the music of the flute went on calmly. Saul, with his crazy thoughts, passed. The mad King, racked by his fancy, burned like a flame, devouring itself, flung this way and that by the wind. He breathed prayers and violent abuse, hurling defiance at the void about him, the void within himself. And when he could

speaking no more and fell breathless to the ground, there rang through the silence the smiling peace of the song of the young shepherd, who had never ceased. Then, with a furious beating in his heart, came Saul in silence up to where the boy lay in the heather: in silence he gazed at him: he sat down by his side and placed his fevered hand on the cool brows of the shepherd. Untroubled, David turned, and smiled; and looked at the King. He laid his hand on Saul's knees, and went on singing and playing his flute. Evening came: David went to sleep in the middle of his song, and Saul wept. And through the starry night there rose once more the serene joyous hymn of nature refreshed, the song of thanksgiving of the soul relieved of its burden.

When he wrote the scene, Christophe had thought of nothing but his own joy: he had never given a thought to the manner of its performance: and it had certainly never occurred to him that it might be produced on the stage. He meant it to be sung at a concert at such time as the concert-halls should be open to him.

One evening he spoke of it to Achille Roussin, and when, by request, he had tried to give him an idea of it on the piano, he was amazed to see Roussin burst into enthusiasm, and declare that it must at all costs be produced at one of the theaters, and that he would see to it. He was even more amazed when, a few days later, he saw that Roussin was perfectly serious: and his amazement grew to stupefaction when he heard that Sylvain Kohn and Goujart, a music critic who had been supercilious toward him, were taking it up. He had to admit that their personal animosity had yielded to their love of art: and he was much surprised. The only man who was not eager to see his work produced was himself. It was not suited to the theater: it was nonsense, and almost hurtful to stage it. But Roussin was so insistent, Sylvain Kohn so persuasive, and Goujart so positive, that Christophe yielded to the temptation. He was weak. He was so longing to hear his music!

It was quite easy for Roussin. Manager and artist rushed to please him. It happened that a newspaper was organizing a benefit *matinée* for some charity. It was arranged that the

David should be produced. A good orchestra was got together. As for the singers, Roussin claimed that he had found the ideal representative of *David*.

The rehearsals were begun. The orchestra came through the first reading fairly well, although, as usual in France, there was not much discipline about it. Saul had a good, though rather tired, voice: and he knew his business. The *David* was a handsome, tall, plump, solid lady with a sentimental vulgar voice which she used heavily, with a melodramatic tremolo and all the café-concert tricks. Christophe scowled. As soon as she began to sing it was obvious that she could not be allowed to play the part. After the first pause in the rehearsal he went to the impresario, who had charge of the business side of the undertaking, and was present, with Sylvain Kohn, at the rehearsal. The impresario beamed and said:

"Well, are you satisfied?"

"Yes," said Christophe. "I think it can be made all right. There's only one thing that won't do: the singer. She must be changed. Tell her as gently as you can: you're used to it. . . . It will be quite easy for you to find me another."

The impresario looked disgruntled: he looked at Christophe as though he could not believe that he was serious; and he said:

"But that's impossible!"

"Why is it impossible?" asked Christophe.

The impresario looked cunningly at Sylvain Kohn, and replied:

"But she has so much talent!"

"Not a spark," said Christophe.

"What! . . . She has a fine voice!"

"Not a bit of it."

"And she is beautiful."

"I don't care a damn."

"That won't hurt the part," said Sylvain Kohn, laughing.

"I want a *David*, a *David* who can sing: I don't want *Helen of Troy*," said Christophe.

The impresario rubbed his nose uneasily.

"It's a pity, a great pity . . ." he said. "She is an excellent

artist. . . . I give you my word for it! Perhaps she is not at her best to-day. You must give her another trial."

"All right," said Christophe. "But it is a waste of time."

He went on with the rehearsal. It was worse than ever. He found it hard to go on to the end: it got on his nerves: his remarks to the singer, from cold and polite, became dry and cutting, in spite of the obvious pains she was taking to satisfy him, and the way she ogled him by way of winning his favor. The impresario prudently stopped the rehearsal just when it seemed to be hopeless. By way of softening the bad effect of Christophe's remarks, he bustled up to the singer and paid her heavy compliments. Christophe, who was standing by, made no attempt to conceal his impatience, called the impresario, and said:

"There's no room for argument. I won't have the woman. It's unpleasant, I know: but I did not choose her. Do what you can to arrange the matter."

The impresario bowed frigidly, and said coldly:

"I can't do anything. You must see M. Roussin."

"What has it got to do with M. Roussin? I don't want to bother him with this business," said Christophe.

"That won't bother him," said Sylvain Kohn ironically. And he pointed to Roussin, who had just come in.

Christophe went up to him. Roussin was in high good humor, and cried:

"What! Finished already? I was hoping to hear a bit of it. Well, maestro, what do you say? Are you satisfied?"

"It's going quite well," said Christophe. "I don't know how to thank you . . ."

"Not at all! Not at all!"

"There is only one thing wrong."

"What is it? We'll put it right. I am determined to satisfy you."

"Well . . . the singer. Between ourselves she is detestable."

The beaming smile on Roussin's face froze suddenly. He said, with some asperity:

"You surprise me, my dear fellow."

"She is useless, absolutely useless," Christophe went on.

"She has no voice, no taste, no knowledge of her work, no talent. You're lucky not to have heard her! . . ."

Roussin grew more and more acid. He cut Christophe short, and said cuttingly:

"I know Mlle. de Sainte-Ygraine. She is a very talented artiste. I have the greatest admiration for her. Every man of taste in Paris shares my opinion."

And he turned his back on Christophe, who saw him offer his arm to the actress and go out with her. He was dumfounded, and Sylvain Kohn, who had watched the scene delightedly, took his arm and laughed, and said as they went down the stairs of the theater:—

"Didn't you know that she was his mistress?"

Christophe understood. So it was for her sake and not for his own that his piece was to be produced! That explained Roussin's enthusiasm, the money he had laid out, and the eagerness of his sycophants. He listened while Sylvain Kohn told him the story of the Sainte-Ygraine: a music-hall singer, who, after various successes in the little vaudeville theaters, had, like so many of her kind, been fired with the ambition to be heard on a stage more worthy of her talent. She counted on Roussin to procure her an engagement at the Opéra or the Opéra-Comique: and Roussin, who asked nothing better, had seen in the performance of *David* an opportunity of revealing to the Parisian public at no very great risk the lyrical gifts of the new tragedienne, in a part which called for no particular dramatic acting, and gave her an excellent opportunity of displaying the elegance of her figure.

Christophe heard the story through to the end: then he shook off Sylvain Kohn and burst out laughing. He laughed and laughed. When he had done, he said:

"You disgust me. You all disgust me. Art is nothing to you. It's always women, nothing but women. An opera is put on for a dancer, or a singer, for the mistress of M. So-and-So, or Madame Thingummy. You think of nothing but your dirty little intrigues. Bless you, I'm not angry with you: you are like that: very well then, be so and wallow in

your mire. But we must part company: we weren't made to live together. Good-night."

He left him, and when he reached home, wrote to Roussin, saying that he withdrew the piece, and did not disguise his reasons for doing so.

It meant a breach with Roussin and all his gang. The consequences were felt at once. The newspapers had made a certain amount of talk about the forthcoming piece, and the story of the quarrel between the composer and the singer appeared in due course. A certain conductor was adventurous enough to play the piece at a Sunday afternoon concert. His good fortune was disastrous for Christophe. The *David* was played—and hissed. All the singer's friends had passed the word to teach the insolent musician a lesson: and the outside public, who had been bored by the symphonic poem, added their voices to the verdict of the critics. To crown his misfortunes, Christophe was ill-advised enough to accept the invitation to display his talents as a pianist at the same concert by giving a *Fantasia* for piano and orchestra. The unkindly disposition of the audience, which had been to a certain extent restrained during the performance of the *David*, out of consideration for the interpreters, broke loose, when they found themselves face to face with the composer,—whose playing was not all that it might have been. Christophe was unnerved by the noise in the hall, and stopped suddenly half-way through a movement: and he looked jeeringly at the audience, who were startled into silence, and played *Malbrouck s'en va-t-en guerre!*—and said insolently:

"That is all you are fit for."

Then he got up and went away.

There was a terrific row. The audience shouted that he had insulted them, and that he must come and apologize. Next day the papers unanimously slaughtered the grotesque German to whom justice had been meted out by the good taste of Paris.

And then once more he was left in absolute isolation. Once more Christophe found himself alone, more solitary

than ever, in that great, hostile, stranger city. He did not worry about it. He began to think that he was fated to be so, and would be so all his life.

He did not know that a great soul is never alone, that, however Fortune may cheat him of friendship, in the end a great soul creates friends by the radiance of the love with which it is filled, and that even in that hour, when he thought himself for ever isolated, he was more rich in love than the happiest men and women in the world.

Living with the Stevens was a little girl of thirteen or fourteen, to whom Christophe had given lessons at the same time as Colette. She was a distant cousin of Colette's, and her name was Grazia Buontempi. She was a little girl with a golden-brown complexion, with cheeks delicately tinged with red: healthy-looking: she had a little aquiline nose, a large well-shaped mouth, always half-open, a round chin, very white, calm clear eyes, softly smiling, a round forehead framed in masses of long, silky hair, which fell in long, waving locks loosely down to her shoulders. She was like a little Virgin of Andrea del Sarto, with her wide face and serenely gazing eyes.

She was Italian. Her parents lived almost all the year round in the country on an estate in the North of Italy: plains, fields, little canals. From the loggia on the housetop they looked down on golden vines, from which here and there the black spikes of the cypress-trees emerged. Beyond them were fields, and again fields. Silence. The lowing of the oxen returning from the fields, and the shrill cries of the peasants at the plow were to be heard:

"Thi! . . . Fat innanz'! . . ."

Grasshoppers chirruped in the trees, frogs croaked by the waterside. And at night there was infinite silence under the silver beams of the moon. In the distance, from time to time, the watchers by the crops, sleeping in huts of branches, fired their guns by way of warning thieves that they were awake. To those who heard them drowsily, these noises meant no more than the chiming of a dull clock in the distance, marking the hours of the night. And silence

closed again, like a soft cloak, about the soul.

Round little Grazia life seemed asleep. Her people did not give her much attention. In the calmness and beauty that was all about her she grew up peacefully without haste, without fever. She was lazy, and loved to dawdle and to sleep. For hours together she would lie in the garden. She would let herself be borne onward by the silence like a fly on a summer stream. And sometimes, suddenly, for no reason, she would begin to run. She would run like a little animal, head and shoulders a little leaning to the right, moving easily and supplely. She was like a kid climbing and slithering among the stones for the sheer joy of leaping about. She would talk to the dogs, the frogs, the grass, the trees, the peasants, and the beasts in the farmyard. She adored all the creatures about her, great and small: but she was less at her ease with the great. She saw very few people. The estate was isolated and far from any town. Very rarely there came along the dusty road some trudging, solemn peasant, or lovely country woman, with bright eyes and sunburnt face, walking with a slow rhythm, head high and chest well out. For days together Grazia lived alone in the silence of the garden: she saw no one: she was never bored: she was afraid of nothing.

One day a tramp came, stealing fowls. He stopped dead when he saw the little girl lying on the grass, eating a piece of bread and butter and humming to herself. She looked up at him calmly, and asked him what he wanted. He said:

"Give me something, or I'll hurt you."

She held out her piece of bread and butter and smiled, and said:

"You must not do harm."

Then he went away.

Her mother died. Her father, a kind, weak man, was an old Italian of a good family, robust, jovial, affectionate, but rather childish, and he was quite incapable of bringing up his child. Old Buontempi's sister, Madame Stevens, came to the funeral, and was struck by the loneliness of the child, and decided to take her back to Paris for a while, to distract her from her grief. Grazia and her father wept: but

when Madame Stevens had made up her mind to anything, there was nothing for it but to give in: nobody could stand out against her. She had the brains of the family: and, in her house in Paris, she directed everything, dominated everybody: her husband, her daughter, her lovers:—for she had not denied herself in the matter of love: she went straight at her duties, and her pleasures: she was a practical woman and a passionate—very worldly and very restless.

Transplanted to Paris, Grazia adored her pretty cousin Colette, whom she amused. When they were out together in the Bois, outside Paris, she would walk in Colette's shadow, sit at her feet; run in front of her, break off branches that might be in her way, place stones in the mud for her to walk on. And one evening in the garden, when Colette shivered and asked for her shawl, she gave a little cry of delight—she was at once ashamed of it—to think that her beloved would be wrapped in something of hers, and would give it back to her presently filled with the scent of her body.

Outside that she was just a docile little girl, dreamy, lazy, greedy, blushing on the slightest provocation, now silent for hours together, now talking volubly, easily touched to tears and laughter, breaking suddenly into fits of sobbing or childish laughter. She loved to laugh, and silly little things would amuse her. She never tried to be grown up. She remained a child. She was, above all, kind and could not bear to hurt anybody, and she was hurt by the least angry word addressed to herself. She was very modest and retiring, ready to love and admire anything that seemed good and beautiful to her, and so she attributed to others qualities which they did not possess.

She was being educated, for she was very backward. And that was how she came to be taught music by Christophe.

She saw him for the first time at a crowded party in her aunt's house. Christophe, who was incapable of adapting himself to his audience, played an interminable *adagio* which made everybody yawn: when it seemed to be over he began again: and everybody wondered if it was ever going to end. Madame Stevens was boiling with impatience:

Colette was highly amused: she was enjoying the absurdity of it, and rather pleased with Christophe for being so insensible of it: she felt that he was a force, and she liked that: but it was comic too: and she would have been the last person to defend him. Grazia alone was moved to tears by the music. She hid herself away in a corner of the room. When it was over she went away, so that no one should see her emotion, and also because she could not bear to see people making fun of Christophe.

A few days later, at dinner, Madame Stevens in her presence spoke of her having music-lessons from Christophe. Grazia was so upset that she let her spoon drop into her soup-plate, and splashed herself and her neighbor. Colette said she ought first to have lessons in table-manners. Madame Stevens added that Christophe was not the person to go to for that. Grazia was glad to be scolded in Christophe's company.

Christophe began to teach her. She was stiff and frozen, and held her arms close to her sides, and could not stir: and when Christophe placed his hand on hers, to correct the position of her fingers, and stretched them over the keys, she nearly fainted. She was fearful of playing badly for him: but in vain did she practise until she nearly made herself ill, and evoked impatient protests from her cousin: she always played vilely when Christophe was present: she was breathless, and her fingers were as stiff as pieces of wood, or as flabby as cotton: she struck the wrong notes and gave the emphasis all wrong: Christophe would lose his temper, scold her, and go away: then she would long to die.

There came a time when her exile was too hard for the little southern creature, a time when she had to fly back towards the light.—That was after Christophe's concert. She went to it with the Stevens: and she was tortured by the hideous sight of the rabble amusing themselves with insulting an artist. . . . An artist? The man who, in Grazia's eyes, was the very type of art, the personification of all that was divine in life! She was on the point of tears; she longed to get away. She had to listen to all the caterwauling, the hisses, the howls, and, when they reached home, to

the laughter of Colette. She escaped to her room, and through part of the night she sobbed: she spoke to Christophe, and consoled him: she would gladly have given her life for him, and she despaired of ever being able to do anything to make him happy. It was impossible for her to stay in Paris any longer. She begged her father to take her away, saying:

"I cannot live here any longer; I cannot: I shall die if you leave me here any longer."

Her father came at once, and though it was very painful to them both to stand up to her terrible aunt, they screwed up their courage for it by a desperate effort of will.

Grazia returned to the sleepy old estate. She was glad to get back to Nature and the creatures that she loved. Then the serene, monotonous days succeeded each other in the life of his distant friend. And the Italian peace, the genius of tranquillity, calm happiness, silent contemplation, once more took possession of that chaste and silent heart, in whose depths there still burned, like a little constant flame, the memory of Christophe. But Christophē never knew of the simple love that watched over him from afar, and was later to fill so great a room in his life.

III

He was alone. He thought himself alone. But he did not suffer overmuch. He did not feel that bitter anguish that had given him such great agony in Germany. He was stronger, riper: he knew that it must be so. His illusions about Paris were destroyed: men were everywhere the same: he must be a law unto himself, and not waste strength in a childish struggle with the world: he must be himself, calmly, tranquilly. As Beethoven had said, "If we surrender the forces of our lives to life, what, then, will be left for the noblest and highest?"

He strode about Paris rejoicing in his strength. If he were misunderstood, so much the better! He would be all the freer. To create, as genius must, a whole world, organ-

ically constituted according to his own inward laws, the artist must live in it altogether. An artist can never be too much alone. What is terrible is to see his ideas reflected in a mirror which deforms and stunts them. He must say nothing to others of what he is doing until he has done it: otherwise he would never have the courage to go on to the end: for it would no longer be his idea, but the miserable idea of others that would live in him.

Now that there was nothing to disturb his dreams, they bubbled forth like springs from all the corners of his soul, and from every stone of the roads by which he walked. He was living in a visionary state. Everything he saw and heard called forth in him creatures and things different from those he saw and heard. He had only to live to find everywhere about him the life of his heroes. Their sensations came to him of their own accord. The eyes of the passers-by, the sound of a voice borne by the wind, the light on a lawn, the birds singing in the trees of the Luxembourg, a convent-bell ringing so far away, the pale sky, the little patch of sky seen from his room, the sounds and shades of sound of the different hours of the day, all these were not in himself, but in the creatures of his dreams.—Christophe was happy.

But his material position was worse than ever. He had lost his few pupils, his only resource. It was September, and rich people were out of town, and it was difficult to find new pupils. The only one he had was an engineer, a crazy, clever fellow, who had taken it into his head, at forty, to become a great violinist. Christophe did not play the violin very well: but he knew more about it than his pupil: and for some time he gave him three hours a week at two francs an hour. But at the end of six weeks the engineer got tired of it, and suddenly discovered that painting was his vocation.—When he imparted his discovery to Christophe, Christophe laughed heartily: but, when he had done laughing, he reckoned up his finances, and found that he had in hand the twelve francs which his pupil had just paid him for his last lessons. That did not worry him: he only said to himself that he must certainly set about finding some

other means of living, and start once more going from publisher to publisher.

He had left the modest room—it was too expensive—which he occupied and taken an attic in the Montrouge district. It was well aired, though it had no other advantage. There was a continual draught. But he wanted to breathe. From his window he had a wide view over the chimneys of Paris to Montmartre in the background. It had not taken him long to move: a handcart was enough: Christophe pushed it himself. Of all his possessions the most precious to him, after his old bag, was one of those casts, which have lately become so popular, of the death-mask of Beethoven. He packed it with as much care as though it were a priceless work of art. He never let it out of his sight. It was an oasis in the midst of the desert of Paris. And also it served him as a moral thermometer. The death-mask indicated more clearly than his own conscience the temperature of his soul, the character of his most secret thoughts: now a cloudy sky, now the gusty wind of the passions, now fine calm weather.

He had to be sparing with his food. He only ate once a day, at one in the afternoon. He bought a large sausage, and hung it up in his window: a thick slice of it, a hunk of bread, and a cup of coffee that he made himself were a feast for the gods. He would have preferred two such feasts. He was angry with himself for having such a good appetite. He called himself to task, and thought himself a glutton, thinking only of his stomach. He lost flesh: he was leaner than a famished dog. But he was solidly built, he had an iron constitution, and his head was clear.

He did not worry about the morrow, though he had good reason for doing so. As long as he had in hand money enough for the day he never bothered about it. When he came to the end of his money he made up his mind to go the round of the publishers once more. He found no work. He was on his way home, empty, when, happening to pass the music-shop where he had been introduced to Daniel Hecht by Sylvain Kohn, he went in without remembering that he had already been there under not very pleasant cir-

cumstances. The first person he saw was Hecht. He was on the point of turning tail: but he was too late: Hecht had seen him. Christophe did not wish to seem to be avoiding him: he went up to Hecht, not knowing what to say to him, and fully prepared to stand up to him as arrogantly as need be: for he was convinced that Hecht would be unsparingly insolent. But he was nothing of the kind. Hecht coldly held out his hand, muttered some conventional inquiry after his health, and, without waiting for any request from Christophe, he pointed to the door of his office, and stepped aside to let him pass. He was secretly glad of the visit, which he had foreseen, though he had given up expecting it. Without seeming to do so, he had carefully followed Christophe's doings: he had missed no opportunity of hearing his music: he had been at the famous performance of the *David*: and, despising the public, he had not been greatly surprised at its hostile reception, since he himself had felt the beauty of the work. There were probably not two people in Paris more capable than Hecht of appreciating Christophe's artistic originality. But he took care not to say anything about it, not only because his vanity was hurt by Christophe's attitude towards himself, but because it was impossible for him to be amiable: it was the peculiarly ungracious quality of his nature. He was sincerely desirous of helping Christophe: but he would not have stirred a finger to do so: he was waiting for Christophe to come and ask it of him. And now that Christophe had come,—instead of generously seizing the opportunity of wiping out the memory of their previous misunderstanding by sparing his visitor any humiliation, he gave himself the satisfaction of hearing him make his request at length: and he even went so far as to offer Christophe, at least for the time being, the work which he had formerly refused. He gave him fifty pages of music to transpose for mandolin and guitar by the next day. After which, being satisfied that he had made him truckle down, he found him less distasteful work, but always so ungraciously that it was impossible to be grateful to him for it: Christophe had to be ground down by necessity before he would ever go to Hecht again. In any case he preferred to earn his

money by such work, however irritating it might be, than accept it as a gift from Hecht, as it was once more offered to him:—and, indeed, Hecht meant it kindly: but Christophe had been conscious of Hecht's original intention to humiliate him: he was forced to accept his conditions, but nothing would induce him to accept any favor from him: he was willing to work for him:—by giving and giving he squared the account:—but he would not be under any obligation to him. Unlike Wagner, that impudent mendicant where his art was concerned, he did not place his art above himself: the bread that he had not earned himself would have choked him.—One day, when he brought some work that he had sat up all night to finish, he found Hecht at table. Hecht, remarking his pallor and the hungry glances that involuntarily he cast at the dishes, felt sure that he had not eaten that day, and invited him to lunch. He meant kindly, but he made it so apparent that he had noticed Christophe's straits that his invitation looked like charity: Christophe would have died of hunger rather than accept. He could not refuse to sit down at the table—(Hecht said he wanted to talk to him):—but he did not touch a morsel: he pretended that he had just had lunch. His stomach was aching with hunger. Christophe would gladly have done without Hecht: but the other publishers were even worse.

In spite of all his difficulties Christophe kept his end up. He washed his linen in his basin, and cleaned his boots, whistling like a blackbird. He consoled himself with the saying of Berlioz: "Let us raise our heads above the miseries of life, and let us blithely sing the familiar gay refrain, *Dies iræ*. . . ."—He used to sing it sometimes, to the dismay of his neighbors, who were amazed and shocked to hear him break off in the middle and shout with laughter.

He led a life of stern chastity. As Berlioz remarked: "The lover's life is a life for the idle and the rich." Christophe was neither rich nor likely to become so. When he made a little money he spent it at once on music: he went without food to go to concerts. He would take cheap seats in the gallery of the *Théâtre du Châtelet*: and he would steep himself in music: he found both food and love in it.

For several weeks Christophe had no money for concerts even by fasting: and in his attic under the roof, now that winter was coming in, he was numbed with the cold: he could not sit still at his table. Then he would get up and walk about Paris, trying to warm himself. He had the faculty of forgetting the seething town about him, and slipping away into space and the infinite.

One cold afternoon in December, when the grass was covered with frost, and the roofs of the houses and the great domes were glistening through the fog, and the trees, with their cold, twisted, naked branches, groping through the mist that hung about them, looked like great weeds at the bottom of the sea,—Christophe, who had been shivering all day and could not get warm again, went into the Louvre, which he hardly knew at all.

There was a change in Christophe on that evening when he wandered through the rooms of the Louvre. He was tired, cold, hungry; he was alone. Around him darkness was descending upon the empty galleries, and sleeping forms awoke. Christophe was very cold as he walked in silence among Egyptian sphinxes, Assyrian monsters, bulls of Persepolis, gleaming snakes from Palissy. He seemed to have passed into a magic world: and in his heart there was a strange, mysterious emotion. The dream of humanity wrapped him about,—the strange flowers of the soul. . . .

In the misty gilded light of the picture-galleries, and the gardens of rich brilliant hues, and painted airless fields, Christophe, in a state of fever, on the very brink of illness, was visited by a miracle.—He was walking, numbed by hunger, by the coldness of the galleries, by the bewildering mass of pictures: his head was whirling. When he reached the end of the gallery that looks on to the river, he stood before the *Good Samaritan* of Rembrandt, and leaned on the rail in front of the pictures to keep himself from falling: he closed his eyes for a moment. When he opened them on the picture in front of him—he was quite close to it—and he was held spellbound. . . .

Day was spent. Day was already far gone; it was already dead. The invisible sun was sinking down into the night. It

was the magic hour when dreams and visions come mounting from the soul, saddened by the labors of the day, still, musing drowsily. All is silent, only the beating of the heart is heard. In the body there is hardly the strength to move, hardly to breathe; sadness; resignation; only an immense longing to fall into the arms of a friend, a hunger for some miracle, a feeling that some miracle must come. . . . It comes! A flood of golden light flames through the twilight, is cast upon the walls of the hovel, on the shoulder of the stranger bearing the dying man, touches with its warmth those humble objects, and those poor creatures, and the whole takes on a new gentleness, a divine glory. It is the very God, clasping in his terrible, tender arms the poor wretches, weak, ugly, poor, unclean, the poor down-at-heel rascal, the miserable creatures, with twisted haggard faces, thronging outside the window, the apathetic, silent creatures standing in mortal terror,—all the pitiful human beings of Rembrandt, the herd of obscure broken creatures who know nothing, can do nothing, only wait, tremble, weep, and pray. —But the Master is there. He will come: it is known that He will come. Not He Himself is seen: only the light that goes before, and the shadow of the light which He casts upon all men. . . .

Christophe left the Louvre, staggering and tottering. His head ached. He could not see. In the street it was raining, but he hardly noticed the puddles between the flags and the water trickling down from his shoes. Over the Seine the yellowish sky was lit up, as the day waned, by an inward flame—like the light of a lamp. Still Christophe was spell-bound, hypnotized. It seemed as though nothing existed: not the carriages rattling over the stones with a pitiless noise: the passers-by were not banging into him with their wet umbrellas: he was not walking in the street: perhaps he was sitting at home and dreaming: perhaps he had ceased to exist. . . . And suddenly,—(he was so weak!)—he turned giddy and felt himself falling heavily forward. . . . It was only for the flash of a second: he clenched his fists, hurled himself backward, and recovered his balance.

At that very moment when he emerged into conscious-

ness his eyes met the eyes of a woman standing on the other side of the street, who seemed to be looking for recognition. He stopped dead, trying to remember when he had seen her before. It was only after a moment or two that he could place those sad, soft eyes: it was the little French governess whom, unwittingly, he had had dismissed in Germany, for whom he had been looking for so long to beg her to forgive him. She had stopped, too, in the busy throng, and was looking at him. Suddenly he saw her try to cross through the crowd of people and step down into the road to come to him. He rushed to meet her: but they were separated by a block in the traffic: he saw her again for a moment struggling on the other side of that living wall: he tried to force his way through, was knocked over by a horse, slipped and fell on the slippery asphalt, and was all but run over. When he got up, covered with mud, and succeeded in reaching the other side of the street, she had disappeared.

He tried to follow her, but he had another attack of giddiness, and he had to give it up. Illness was close upon him: he felt that, but he would not submit to it. He set his teeth, and would not go straight home, but went far out of his way. It was just a useless torment to him: he had to admit that he was beaten: his legs ached, he dragged along, and only reached home with frightful difficulty. Half-way up the stairs he choked, and had to sit down. When he got to his icy room he refused to go to bed: he sat in his chair, wet through; his head was heavy and he could hardly breathe, and he drugged himself with music as broken as himself. He heard a few fugitive bars of the *Unfinished Symphony* of Schubert. Poor Schubert! He, too, was alone when he wrote that, feverish, somnolent, in that semitorpid condition which precedes the last great sleep: he sat dreaming by the fireside: all round him were heavy drowsy melodies, like stagnant water: he dwelt on them, like a child half-asleep delighting in some self-told story, and repeating some passage in it twenty times: so sleep comes, then death. . . . And Christophe heard fleetingly that other music, with burning hands, closed eyes, a little weary smile, heart big with sighs, dreaming of the deliverance of death:—the first

chorus in the Cantata of J. S. Bach: "*Dear God, when shall I die?*" . . . It was sweet to sink back into the soft melodies slowly floating by, to hear the distant, muffled clangor of the bells. . . . To die, to pass into the peace of earth! . . . *Und dann selber Erde werden.* . . . "And then himself to become earth. . . ."

Christophe shook off these morbid thoughts, the murderous smile of the siren who lies in wait for the hours of weakness of the soul. He got up, and tried to walk about his room: but he could not stand. He was shaking and shivering with fever. He had to go to bed. He felt that it was serious this time: but he did not lay down his arms: he never was of those who, when they are ill, yield utterly to their illness: he struggled, he refused to be ill, and, above all, he was absolutely determined not to die. He had his poor mother waiting for him in Germany. And he had his work to do: he would not yield to death. He clenched his chattering teeth, and firmly grasped his will that was oozing away: he was like a sturdy swimmer battling with the waves dashing over him. At every moment, down he plunged: his mind wandered, endless fancies haunted him, memories of Germany and of Parisian society: he was obsessed by rhythms and scraps of melody which went round, and round, and round, like horses in a circus: the sudden shock of the golden light of the *Good Samaritan*: the tense, stricken faces in the shadow: and then, dark nothingness and night. Then up he would come once more, wrenching away the grimacing mists, clenching his fists, and setting his jaw. He clung to all those whom he loved in the present and the past, to the face of the friend he had just seen in the street, his dear mother, and to the indestructible life within himself, that he felt was like a rock, impervious to death. But once more the rock was covered by the tide: the waves dashed over it, and tore his soul away from its hold upon it: it was borne headlong and dashed by the foam. And Christophe struggled in delirium, babbling strangely, conducting and playing an imaginary orchestra: trombones, horns, cymbals, timbals, bassoons, double-bass, . . . he scraped, blew, beat the drum, frantically. The poor wretch

was bubbling over with suppressed music. For weeks he had been unable to hear or play any music, and he was like a boiler at high pressure, near bursting-point. Certain insistent phrases bored into his brain like gimlets, pierced his skull, and made him scream with agony. After these attacks he would fall back on his pillow, dead tired, wet through, utterly weak, breathless, choking. He had placed his water-jug by his bedside, and he took great draughts of it. The various noises of the adjoining rooms, the banging of the attic doors, made him start. He was filled with a delirious disgust for the creatures swarming round him. But his will fought on, sounded a warlike clarion-note, declaring battle on all devils. . . . "*Und wenn die Welt voll Teufel wär, und wollten uns verschlingen, so fürchten wir uns nicht so sehr. . . .*" ("And even though the world were full of devils, all seeking to devour us, we should not be afraid. . . .").

And over the sea of scalding shadows that dashed over him there came a sudden calm, glimpses of light, a gentle murmuring of violins and viols, the clear triumphant notes of trumpets and horns, while, almost motionless, like a great wall, there rose from the sick man's soul an indomitable song, like a choral of J. S. Bach.

While he was fighting against the phantoms of fever and the choking in his lungs, he was dimly aware that some one had opened the door, and that a woman entered with a candle in her hand. He thought it was another hallucination. He tried to speak, but could not, and fell back on his pillow. When, every now and then, he was brought for a moment back to consciousness, he felt that his pillow had been raised, that his feet had been wrapped up, that there was something burning his back, or he would see the woman, whose face was not altogether unfamiliar, sitting at the foot of his bed. Then he saw another face, that of a doctor using a stethoscope. Christophe could not hear what they were saying, but he gathered that they were talking of sending him to the hospital. He tried to protest, to cry out that he would not go, that he would die where he was, alone: but he could only frame incomprehensible sounds. But the

woman understood him: for she took his part, and reassured him. He tried hard to find out who she was. As soon as he could, with frightful effort, frame a sentence, he asked her. She replied that she lived in the next attic and had heard him moaning through the wall, and had taken the liberty of coming in, thinking that he wanted help. She begged him respectfully not to wear himself out with talking. He obeyed her. He was worn out with the effort he had made: he lay still and said nothing: but his brain went on working, painfully gathering together its scattered memories. Where had he seen her? . . . At last he remembered: yes, he had met her on the attic landing: she was a servant, and her name was Sidonie.

He watched her with half-closed eyes, so that she could not see him. She was little, and had a grave face, a wide forehead, hair drawn back, so that her temples were exposed; her cheeks were pale and high-boned; she had a short nose, pale blue eyes, with a soft, steady look in them, thick lips tightly pressed together, an anemic complexion, a humble, deliberate, and rather stiff manner. She looked after Christophe with busy silent devotion, without a spark of familiarity, and without ever breaking down the reserve of a servant who never forgets class differences.

However, little by little, when he was better and could talk to her, Christophe's affectionate cordiality made Sidonie talk to him a little more freely: but she was always on her guard: there were obviously certain things which she would not tell. She was a mixture of humility and pride. Christophe learned that she came from Brittany, where she had left her father, of whom she spoke very discreetly: but Christophe gathered that he did nothing but drink, have a good time, and live on his daughter: she put up with it, without saying anything, from pride: and she never failed to send him part of her month's wages: but she was not taken in. She had also a younger sister who was preparing for a teacher's examination, and she was very proud of her. She was paying almost all the expenses of her education. She worked frightfully hard, with grim determination.

When he was getting better and was allowed to get up

for a little, the first thing he thought of was to pay Sidonie back for the expenses she had incurred during his illness. It was impossible for him to go about Paris looking for work, and he had to bring himself to write to Hecht: he asked him for an advance on account of future work. With his amazing combination of indifference and kindness Hecht made him wait a fortnight for a reply—a fortnight during which Christophe tormented himself and practically refused to touch any of the food Sidonie brought him, and would only accept a little bread and milk, which she forced him to take, and then he grumbled and was angry with himself because he had not earned it: then, without a word, Hecht sent him the sum he asked: and not once during the months of Christophe's illness did Hecht make any inquiry after him. He had a genius for making himself disliked even when he was doing a kindness. Even in his kindness Hecht could not be generous.

Sidonie came every day in the afternoon and again in the evening. She cooked Christophe's dinner for him. She made no noise, but went quietly about her business: and when she saw the dilapidated condition of his clothes she took them away to mend them. Insensibly there had crept an element of affection into their relation. Christophe talked at length about his mother: and that touched Sidonie: she would put herself in Louisa's place, alone in Germany: and she had a maternal feeling for Christophe, and when he talked to her he tried to trick his need of mothering and love, from which a man suffers most when he is weak and ill. He felt nearer Louisa with Sidonie than with anybody else. Sometimes he would confide his artistic troubles to her. She would pity him gently, though she seemed to regard such sorrows of the intellect ironically. That, too, reminded him of his mother and comforted him.

Some days Sidonie would be queer and depressed: but he attributed that to her work. Once when they were talking she got up suddenly and left him, making some excuse about her work. Finally, after a day when Christophe had been more confidential than usual, she broke off her visits for a time: and when she came back she would only talk

to him constrainedly. He wondered what he could have done to offend her. He asked her. She replied quickly that he had not offended her: but she stayed away again. A few days later she told him that she was going away: she had given up her situation and was leaving the house. Coldly and reservedly she thanked him for all his kindness, told him she hoped he would soon recover, and that his mother would remain in good health, and then she said good-by. He was so astonished at her abrupt departure that he did not know what to say: he tried to discover her reasons: she replied evasively. He asked her where she was going: she did not reply, and, to cut short his questions, she got up to go. As she reached the door he held out his hand: she grasped it warmly: but her face did not betray her, and to the end she maintained her stiff, cold manner. She went away.

He never understood why.

He dragged through the winter—a wet, misty, muddy winter. Weeks on end without sun. Although Christophe was better he was by no means recovered. He still had a little pain in his lungs, a lesion which healed slowly, and fits of coughing which kept him from sleeping at night. The doctor had forbidden him to go out. He might just as well have ordered him to go to the Riviera or the Canary Islands. He had to go out! If he did not go out to look for his dinner, his dinner would certainly not come to look for him.—And he was ordered medicines which he could not afford. And so he gave up consulting doctors: it was a waste of money: and besides he was always ill at ease with them: they could not understand each other: they lived in separate worlds. They had an ironical and rather contemptuous pity for the poor devil of an artist who claimed to be a world to himself, and was swept along like a straw by the river of life. He was humiliated by being examined, and prodded, and handled by these men. He was ashamed of his sick body, and thought:

“How glad I shall be when *it* is dead!”

In spite of loneliness, illness, poverty, and so many other

causes of suffering, Christophe bore his lot patiently. He had never been so patient. He was surprised at himself. Illness is often a blessing. By ravaging the body it frees the soul and purifies it: during the nights and days of forced inaction thoughts arise which are fearful of the raw light of day, and are scorched by the sun of health. No man who has never been ill can have a thorough knowledge of himself.

It was about the end of March. For months Christophe had not spoken to a soul nor had a single letter, except every now and then a few lines from his mother, who did not know that he was ill and did not tell him that she herself was ill. His relation with the outside world was confined to his journeys to the music shop to take or bring away his work. He arranged to go there at times when he knew that Hecht would be out—to avoid having to talk to him. The precaution was superfluous, for the only time he met Hecht, he hardly did more than ask him a few indifferent questions about his health.

He was immured in a prison of silence when, one morning, he received an invitation from Madame Roussin to a musical *soirée*: a famous quartet was to play. The letter was very friendly in tone, and Roussin had added a few cordial lines. He was not very proud of his quarrel with Christophe: the less so as he had since quarreled with the singer and now condemned her in no sparing terms. He was a good fellow: he never bore those whom he had wronged any grudge. And he would have thought it preposterous for any of his victims to be more thin-skinned than himself. And so, when he had the pleasure of seeing them again, he never hesitated about holding out his hand.

Christophe's first impulse was to shrug his shoulders and vow that he would not go. But he wavered as the day of the concert came nearer. He was stifling from never hearing a human voice or a note of music. But he vowed again that he would never set foot inside the Roussins' house. But when the day came he went, raging against his own cowardice.

He was ill rewarded. Hardly did he find himself once

more in the gathering of politicians and snobs than he was filled with an aversion for them more violent than ever: for during his months of solitude he had lost the trick of such people. It was impossible to hear the music: it was a profanation; Christophe made up his mind to go as soon as the first piece was over.

He glanced round among the faces of those people who were even physically so antipathetic to him. At the other end of the room he saw a face, the face of a young man, looking at him, and then he turned away at once. There was in the face a strange quality of candor which among such bored, indifferent people was most striking. The eyes were timid, but clear and direct. French eyes, which, once they marked a man, went on looking at him with absolute truth, hiding nothing of the soul behind them, missing nothing of the soul of the man at whom they gazed. They were familiar to Christophe. And yet he did not know the face. It was that of a young man between twenty and twenty-five, short, slightly stooping, delicate-looking, beardless, and melancholy, with chestnut hair, irregular features, though fine, a certain crookedness which gave it an expression not so much of uneasiness as of bashfulness, which was not without charm, and seemed to contradict the tranquillity of the eyes. He was standing in an open door: and nobody was paying any attention to him. Once more Christophe looked at him: and once more he met his eyes, which turned away timidly with a delightful awkwardness: once more he "recognized" them: it seemed to him that he had seen them in another face.

Christophe, as usual, was incapable of concealing what he felt, and moved towards the young man: but as he made his way he wondered what he should say to him: and he hesitated and stood still looking to right and left, as though he were moving without any fixed object. But the young man was not taken in, and saw that Christophe was moving towards himself: he was so nervous at the thought of speaking to him that he tried to slip into the next room: but he was glued to his place by his very bashfulness. So they came face to face. It was some moments before they

could find anything to say. And as they went on standing like that each thought the other must think him absurd. At last Christophe looked straight at the young man, and said with a smile, in a gruff voice:

"You're not a Parisian?"

In spite of his embarrassment the young man smiled at this unexpected question, and replied in the negative. His light voice, with its hint of a musical quality, was like some delicate instrument.

"I thought not," said Christophe. And, as he saw that he was a little confused by the singular remark, he added:

"It is no reproach."

But the young man's embarrassment was only increased.

There was another silence. The young man made an effort to speak: his lips trembled: it seemed that he had a sentence on the tip of his tongue, but he could not bring himself to speak it. Christophe eagerly studied his mobile face, the muscles of which he could see twitching under the clear skin: he did not seem to be of the same clay as the people all about him in the room, with their heavy, coarse faces, which were only a continuation of their necks, part and parcel of their bodies. In the young man's face the soul shone forth: in every part of it there was a spiritual life.

He could not bring himself to speak. Christophe went on genially:

"What are you doing among all these people?"

He spoke out loud with that strange freedom of manner which made him hated. His friend blushed and could not help looking round to see if he had been heard: and Christophe disliked the movement. Then, instead of answering, he asked with a shy, sweet smile:

"And you?"

Christophe began to laugh as usual, rather loudly.

"Yes. And I," he said delightedly.

The young man at last summoned up his courage.

"I love your music so much!" he said, in a choking voice.

Then he stopped and tried once more, vainly, to get the better of his shyness. He was blushing, and knew it: and he

blushed the more, up to his temples and round to his ears. Christophe looked at him with a smile, and longed to take him in his arms. The young man looked at him timidly.

"No," he said. "Of course, I can't . . . I can't talk about that . . . not here. . . ."

Christophe took his hand with a grin. He felt the stranger's thin fingers tremble in his great paw and press it with an involuntary tenderness: and the young man felt Christophe's paw affectionately crush his hand. They ceased to hear the chatter of the people round them. They were alone together and they knew that they were friends.

It was only for a second, for then Madame Roussin touched Christophe on the arm with her fan and said:

"I see that you have introduced yourselves and don't need me to do so. The boy came on purpose to meet you this evening."

Then, rather awkwardly, they parted.

Christophe asked Madame Roussin:

"Who is he?"

"What?" said she. "You don't know him? He is a young poet and writes very prettily. One of your admirers. He is a good musician and plays the piano quite nicely. It is no good discussing you in his presence: he is mad about you."

"Oh! Bless him for that!" said Christophe. "Where did he go?" he asked, without listening to Madame Roussin, who had already begun to talk about something else.

He went to look for him. But his unknown friend had disappeared. Christophe returned to Madame Roussin:

"Tell me, what is his name?"

"Who?" she asked.

"The boy you were talking about just now."

"Your young poet?" she said. "His name is Olivier Jeannin."

The name rang in Christophe's ears like some familiar melody. The shadowy figure of a girl floated for a moment before his eyes. But the new image, the image of his friend blotted it out at once.

Christophe went home. He strode through the streets of Paris mingling with the throng. He saw nothing, heard

nothing; he was insensible to everything about him. He was like a lake cut off from the rest of the world by a ring of mountains. Not a breath stirred, not a sound was heard, all was still. Peace. He said to himself over and over again:

"I have a friend."

ANTOINETTE

I

The Jeannins were one of those old French families who have remained stationary for centuries in the same little corner of a province, and have kept themselves pure from any infusion of foreign blood.

Antoine Jeannin, a sturdy, jovial, active little man had taken to wife the daughter of a country magistrate, Lucie de Villiers. They had two children: a girl, Antoinette, the elder by five years; and a boy, Olivier.

Antoinette was a pretty dark-haired child, with a charming, honest face of the French type, round, with sharp eyes, a round forehead, a fine chin, a little straight nose—"one of those very pretty, fine, noble noses" (as an old French portrait-painter says so charmingly) "in which there was a certain imperceptible play of expression, which animated the face, and revealed the subtlety of the workings of her mind as she talked or listened." She had her father's gaiety and carelessness.

Olivier was a delicate fair boy, short, like his father, but very different in character. His health had been undermined by one illness after another when he was a child: and although, as a result, he was petted by his family, his physical weakness had made him a melancholy, dreamy little boy, who was afraid of death and very poorly equipped

for life. He was shy, and preferred to be alone: he avoided the society of other children: he was ill at ease with them: he hated their games and quarrels: their brutality filled him with horror. He let them strike him, not from want of courage, but from timidity, because he was afraid to defend himself, afraid of hurting them: they would have bullied the life out of him, but for the safeguard of his father's position. He was tender-hearted and morbidly sensitive: a word, a sign of sympathy, a reproach, were enough to make him burst into tears. His sister was much sturdier, and laughed at him, and called him a "little fountain."

The two children were devoted to each other: but they were too different to live together. They went their own ways and lived in their own dreams. As Antoinette grew up, she became prettier: people told her so, and she was well aware of it: it made her happy, and she wove romances about the future. Olivier, in his sickly melancholy, was always rubbed up the wrong way by contact with the outer world: and he withdrew into the circle of his own absurd little brain: and he told himself stories.

Disaster came. Antoine Jeannin was weak, trustful, and a little vain. He loved to throw dust in people's eyes, and easily confounded "seeming" and "being." He spent recklessly, though his extravagance, moderated by fits of remorse as the result of the age-old habit of economy—(he would fling away pounds, and haggle over a farthing)—never seriously impaired his capital. He was not very cautious in business either.

M. Jeannin knocked up against a certain company promoter who was launching a great industrial concern, and had got wind of the banker's easy-going ways and financial resources. This gentleman, who wore the ribbon of the Legion of Honor, and pretended to be intimate with two or three Ministers, an Archbishop, an assortment of senators, and various celebrities of the literary and financial world, and to be in touch with an omnipotent newspaper, had a very imposing manner, and most adroitly assumed the authoritative and familiar tone most calculated to impress his man. By way of introduction and recommenda-

tion, with a clumsiness which would have aroused the suspicions of a quicker man than M. Jeannin, he produced certain ordinary complimentary letters which he had received from the illustrious persons of his acquaintance, asking him to dinner, or thanking him for some invitation they had received: for it is well known that the French are never niggardly with such epistolary small change, nor particularly chary of shaking hands with, and accepting invitations from, an individual whom they have only known for an hour—provided only that he amuses them and does not ask them for money: and even as regards that, there are many who would not refuse to lend their new friend money so long as others did the same. And it would be a poor lookout for a clever man bent on relieving his neighbor of his superfluous money if he could not find a sheep who could be induced to jump the fence so that all the rest would follow.—If other sheep had not taken the fence before him, M. Jeannin would have been the first. He was of the woolly tribe which is made to be fleeced. He was seduced by his visitor's exalted connections, his fluency and his trick of flattery, and also by the first fine results of his advice. He only risked a little at first, and won: then he risked much: finally he risked all: not only his own money, but that of his clients as well. He did not tell them about it: he was sure he would win: he wanted to overwhelm them with the great thing he had done for them.

The venture collapsed. He heard of it indirectly through one of his Parisian correspondents who happened to mention the new crash, without ever dreaming that Jeannin was one of the victims: for the banker had not said a word to anybody: with incredible irresponsibility, he had not taken the trouble—even avoided—asking the advice of men who were in a position to give him information: he had done the whole thing secretly, in the infatuated belief in his infallible common sense, and he had been satisfied with the vaguest knowledge of what he was doing.

From that moment there was a complete change in his character. He relapsed into an alarming state of terror: still he said nothing: but he was bitter, violent, harsh, hor-

ribly sad. But still, when he was with strangers, he affected his old gaiety: but no one could fail to see the change in him: it was attributed to his health. With his family he was less guarded: and they saw at once that he was concealing some serious trouble. They hardly knew him. Sometimes he would burst into a room and ransack a desk; flinging all the papers higgledy-piggledy on to the floor, and flying into a frenzy because he could not find what he was looking for, or because some one offered to help him. Then he would stand stock still in the middle of it all, and when they asked him what he was looking for, he did not know himself. He seemed to have lost all interest in his family: or he would kiss them with tears in his eyes. He could not sleep. He could not eat.

Madame Jeannin saw that they were on the eve of catastrophe: but she had never taken any part in her husband's affairs, and did not understand them. She questioned him: he repulsed her brutally: and, hurt in her pride, she did not persist. But she trembled, without knowing why.

One evening in the room his wife and the two children were sitting round the lamp. Antoinette was sewing a ribbon on to a blouse, talking and humming the while, to Olivier's obvious discomfort, for he was stopping his ears with his fists so as not to hear, while he pored over his book with knitted brows, and his elbows on the table. Madame Jeannin was mending stockings and talking to the old nurse, who was standing by her side and giving an account of her day's expenditure, and seizing the opportunity for a little gossip: she always had some amusing tale to tell in her extraordinary lingo, which used to make them roar with laughter, while Antoinette would try to imitate her. M. Jeannin watched them silently. No one noticed him. He wavered for a moment, sat down, took up a book, opened it at random, shut it again, got up: he could not sit still. He lit a candle and said good-night. He went up to the children and kissed them fondly: they returned his kiss absently without looking up at him,—Antoinette being absorbed in her work, and Olivier in his book. Olivier did not even take his hands from his ears, and grunted "Good-night,"

and went on reading:—(when he was reading even if one of his family had fallen into the fire, he would not have looked up).—M. Jeannin left the room. He lingered in the next room, for a moment. His wife came out soon, the old nurse having gone to arrange the linen-cupboard. She pretended not to see him. He hesitated, then came up to her, and said:

“I beg your pardon. I was rather rude just now.”

She longed to say to him:

“My dear, my dear, that is nothing: but, tell me, what is the matter with you? Tell me, what is hurting you so?”

But she jumped at the opportunity of taking her revenge, and said:

“Let me be! You have been behaving odiously. You treat me worse than you would a servant.”

And she went on in that strain, setting forth all her grievances volubly, shrilly, rancorously.

He raised his hands wearily, smiled bitterly, and left her.

No one heard the report of the revolver. Only, next day, when it was known what had happened, a few of the neighbors remembered that, in the middle of the night, when the streets were quiet, they had noticed a sharp noise like the cracking of a whip. They did not pay any attention to it. The silence of the night fell once more upon the town, wrapping both living and dead about with its mystery.

Madame Jeannin was asleep, but woke up an hour or two later. Not seeing her husband by her side she got up and went anxiously through all the rooms, and downstairs to the offices of the bank, which were in an annex of the house: and there, sitting in his chair in his office, she found M. Jeannin huddled forward on his desk in a pool of blood, which was still dripping down on to the floor. She gave a scream, dropped her candle, and fainted. She was heard in the house. The servants came running, picked her up, took care of her, and laid the body of M. Jeannin on a bed. The door of the children's room was locked. Antoinette was sleeping happily. Olivier heard the sound of voices and footsteps: he wanted to go and see what it was

all about: but he was afraid of waking his sister, and presently he went to sleep again.

Next morning the news was all over the town before they knew anything. Their old nurse came sobbing and told them. Their mother was incapable of thinking of anything: her condition was critical. The two children were left alone in the presence of death. At first they were more fearful than sorrowful. And they were not allowed to weep in peace. The cruel legal formalities were begun the first thing in the morning.

In a few days they were faced with their utter ruin: the loss of a dear one, the loss of their fortune, their position, their public esteem, and the desertion of their friends. A total wreck. Nothing was left to provide for them. They had all three an uncompromising feeling for moral purity, which made their suffering all the greater from the dishonor of which they were innocent. Of the three Antoinette was the most distraught by their sorrow, because she had never really known suffering. Madame Jeannin and Olivier, though they were racked by it, were more inured to it. Instinctively pessimistic, they were overwhelmed but not surprised. The idea of death had always been a refuge to them, as it was now, more than ever: they longed for death. It is pitiful to be so resigned, but not so terrible as the revolt of a young creature, confident and happy, loving every moment of her life, who suddenly finds herself face to face with such unfathomable, irremediable sorrow, and death which is horrible to her. . . .

Antoinette discovered the ugliness of the world in a flash. Her eyes were opened: she saw life and human beings as they are: she judged her father, her mother, and her brother. While Olivier and Madame Jeannin wept together, in her grief she drew into herself. Desperately she pondered the past, the present, and the future: and she saw that there was nothing left for her, no hope, nothing to support her: she could count on no one.

The funeral took place, grimly, shamefully. The Church refused to receive the body of the suicide. The widow and orphans were deserted by the cowardice of their former

friends. One or two of them came for a moment: and their embarrassment was even harder to bear than the absence of the rest. They seemed to make a favor of it, and their silence was big with reproach and pitying contempt. It was even worse with their relations: not only did they receive no single word of sympathy, but they were visited with bitter reproaches.

Madame Jeannin and her two children, who had no idea what would become of them in the future, all agreed to renounce their claim to her dowry, and to their own personal estate, in order, as far as possible, to meet M. Jeannin's debts. And, since it had become impossible for them to stay in the little town, they decided to go to Paris.

Their first impressions of Paris were gloomy enough. As they left the station they were bewildered by the jostling crowd of people in the luggage-room and the confused uproar of the carriages outside. It was raining. They could not find a cab, and had to walk a long way with their arms aching with their heavy parcels, so that they had to stop every now and then in the middle of the street at the risk of being run over or splashed by the carriages. They could not make a single driver pay any attention to them. At last they managed to stop a man who was driving an old and disgustingly dirty barouche. As they were handing in the parcels they let a bundle of rugs fall into the mud. The porter who carried the trunk and the cabman traded on their ignorance, and made them pay double. Madame Jeannin gave the address of one of those second-rate expensive hotels patronized by provincials who go on going to them, in spite of their discomfort, because their grandfathers went to them thirty years ago. They were fleeced there. They were told that the hotel was full, and they were accommodated with one small room for which they were charged the price of three. For dinner they tried to economize by avoiding the table d'hôte: they ordered a modest meal, which cost them just as much and left them famishing. Their illusions concerning Paris had come toppling down as soon as they arrived.

Madame Jeannin took a flat on the fourth floor near the

Jardin des Plantes. The bedrooms looked on to the filthy walls of a gloomy courtyard: the dining-room and the drawing-room—(for Madame Jeannin insisted on having a drawing-room)—on to a busy street. All day long steam-trams went by and hearses crawling along to the Ivry Cemetery. Filthy Italians, with a horde of children, loafed about on the seats, or spent their time in shrill argument. The noise made it impossible to have the windows open: and in the evening, on their way home, they had to force their way through crowds of bustling, evil-smelling people, cross the thronged and muddy streets, pass a horrible pot-house, that was on the ground floor of the next house, in the door of which there were always fat, frowsy women with yellow hair and painted faces, eying the passers-by.

Their small supply of money soon gave out. Every evening with sinking hearts they took stock of the widening hole in their purse. They tried to stint themselves: but they did not know how to set about it: that is a science which can only be learned by years of experimenting, unless it has been practised from childhood. Those who are not naturally economical merely waste their time in trying to be so: as soon as a fresh opportunity of spending money crops up, they succumb to the temptation: they are always going to economize next time: and when they do happen to make a little money, or to think they have made it, they rush out and spend ten times the amount on the strength of it.

All day and every day the Jeannins were out and about in Paris, looking for work. Madame Jeannin, true to the prejudices of her class, would not hear of their engaging in any other profession than those which are called “liberal”—no doubt because they leave their devotees free to starve. She would even have gone so far as to forbid her daughter to take a post as a family governess. Only the official professions, in the service of the State, were not degrading in her eyes.

After days and days of hunting for work Madame Jeannin could find nothing better than a post as music-teacher in a convent—an ungrateful task, ridiculously ill-paid. To

eke out her earnings she copied music in the evenings for an agency. They were very hard on her. She was severely called to task for omitting words and whole lines, as she did in spite of her application, for she was always thinking of so many other things and her wits were wool-gathering. And so, after she had stayed up through the night till her eyes and her back ached, her copy was rejected. She would return home utterly downcast. She would spend days together moaning, unable to stir a finger. For a long time she had been suffering from heart trouble, which had been aggravated by her hard struggles, and filled her with dark forebodings. Sometimes she would have pains, and difficulty in breathing as though she were on the point of death. She never went out without her name and address written on a piece of paper in her pocket in case she should collapse in the street. What would happen if she were to disappear? Antoinette comforted her as best she could by affecting a confidence which she did not possess: she begged her to be careful and to let her go and work in her stead. But the little that was left of Madame Jeannin's pride stirred in her, and she vowed that at least her daughter should not know the humiliation she had to undergo.

A few days later, on a stifling evening at the end of August,—a hot steaming mist hung over the town,—Madame Jeannin came in from her copying agency, whither she had been to deliver a piece of work that was wanted in a hurry. She was late for dinner, and had saved her three sous' bus fare by hurrying home on foot to prevent her children being anxious. When she reached the fourth floor she could neither speak nor breathe. It was not the first time she had returned home in that condition: the children took no notice of it. She forced herself to sit down at table with them. They were both suffering from the heat and did not eat anything: they had to make an effort to gulp down a few morsels of food, and a sip or two of stale water. To give their mother time to recover they did not talk—(they had no desire to talk)—and looked out of the window.

Suddenly Madame Jeannin waved her hands in the air, clutched at the table, looked at her children, moaned, and

collapsed. Antoinette and Olivier sprang to their feet just in time to catch her in their arms. They were beside themselves, and screamed and cried to her:

“Mother! Mother! Dear, dear mother!”

But she made no sound. They were at their wit's end. Antoinette clung wildly to her mother's body, kissed her, called to her. Olivier ran to the door of the flat and yelled:

“Help! Help!”

The housekeeper came running upstairs, and when she saw what had happened she ran for a doctor. But when the doctor arrived, he could only say that the end had come. Death had been instantaneous—happily for Madame Jeannin—although it was impossible to know what thoughts might have been hers during the last moments when she knew that she was dying and leaving her children alone in such misery.

They were alone to bear the horror of the catastrophe, alone to weep, alone to perform the dreadful duties that follow upon death. The porter's wife, a kindly soul, helped them a little: and people came from the convent where Madame Jeannin had taught: but they were given no real sympathy.

The first moments brought inexpressible despair. The only thing that saved them was the very excess of that despair, which made Olivier really ill. Antoinette's thoughts were distracted from her own suffering, and her one idea was to save her brother: and her great, deep love filled Olivier and plucked him back from the violent torment of his grief. Locked in her arms near the bed where their mother was lying in the glimmer of a candle, Olivier said over and over again that they must die, that they must both die, at once: and he pointed to the window. In Antoinette, too, there was the dark desire: but she fought it down: she wished to live. . . .

“Why? Why?”

“For her sake,” said Antoinette—(she pointed to her mother).—“She is still with us. Think . . . after all that she has suffered for our sake, we must spare her the crowning sorrow, that of seeing us die in misery. . . . Ah!” (she

went on emphatically). . . . "And then, we must not give way. I will not! I refuse to give in. You must, you shall be happy, some day!"

"Never!"

"Yes. You shall be happy. We have had too much unhappiness. A change will come: it must. You shall live your life. You shall have children, you shall be happy, you shall, you shall!"

"How are we to live? We cannot do it. . . ."

"We can. What is it, after all? We have to live somehow until you can earn your living. I will see to that. You will see: I'll do it. Ah! If only mother had let me do it, as I could have done. . . ."

"What will you do? I will not have you degrading yourself. You could not do it."

"I can. . . . And there is nothing humiliating in working for one's living—provided it be honest work. Don't you worry about it, please. You will see, everything will come right. You shall be happy, we shall be happy: dear Olivier, *she* will be happy through us. . . ."

The two children were the only mourners at their mother's grave. When the housekeeper asked them if they had no other relations, they replied:

"No. Nobody."

By the bare grave they prayed hand in hand. They set their teeth in desperate resolve and pride and preferred their solitude to the presence of their callous and hypocritical relations.—They returned on foot through the throng of people who were strangers to their grief, strangers to their thoughts, strangers to their lives, and shared nothing with them but their common language. Antoinette had to support Olivier.

They took a tiny flat in the same house on the top floor—two little attics, a narrow hall, which had to serve as a dining-room, and a kitchen that was more like a cupboard. They could have found better rooms in another neighborhood: but it seemed to them that they were still with their mother in that house. The housekeeper took an interest in them for a time: but she was soon absorbed in her

own affairs and nobody bothered about them. They did not know a single one of the other tenants: and they did not even know who lived next door.

Antoinette obtained her mother's post as music-teacher at the convent. She procured other pupils. She had only one idea: to educate her brother until he was ready for the *École Normale*. It was her own idea, and she had decided upon it after mature reflection: she had studied the syllabus and asked about it, and had also tried to find out what Olivier thought:—but he had no ideas, and she chose for him. Once at the *École Normale* he would be sure of a living for the rest of his life, and his future would be assured. He must get in, somehow; whatever it cost, they would have to keep alive till then. It meant five or six terrible years: they would win through. The idea possessed Antoinette, absorbed her whole life.

Sometimes she used to go to the house of the Nathans, who took an interest in her because they had met her at the house of some friends of theirs where she gave lessons: and, in spite of her shyness, she had not been able to avoid accepting invitations to their parties. M. Alfred Nathan was a well-known professor in Paris, a distinguished scientist, and at the same time he was very fond of society. Madame Nathan was a mixture in equal proportions of real kindness and excessive worldliness. They were both generous, with loud-voiced, sincere, but intermittent sympathy for Antoinette.—Generally speaking Antoinette had found more kindness among the Jews than among the members of her own sect. Antoinette who, among the Catholics, had been brought sharp up against a wall of icy indifference, was keenly alive to the worth of the interest, however superficial it might be, which the Nathans took in her. Madame Nathan had marked Antoinette's life of devoted sacrifice: she was sensible of her physical and moral charm: and she made a show of taking her under her protection. She had no children: but she loved young people and often had gatherings of them in her house: and she insisted on Antoinette's coming also, and breaking away from her solitude, and having some amusement in her life. And as she

had no difficulty in guessing that Antoinette's shyness was in part the result of her poverty, she even went so far as to offer to give her a pretty frock or two, which Antoinette refused proudly: but her kindly patroness found a way of forcing her to accept a few of those little presents which are so dear to a woman's innocent vanity. Antoinette was both grateful and embarrassed. She forced herself to go to Madame Nathan's parties from time to time: and being young she managed to enjoy herself in spite of everything.

Olivier had reached the end of his schooldays. The examinations for the *École Normale* were over. It was quite time. Antoinette was very tired. She was counting on his success: her brother had everything in his favor. At school he was regarded as one of the best pupils: and all his masters were agreed in praising his industry and intelligence, except for a certain want of mental discipline which made it difficult for him to bend to any sort of plan. But the responsibility of it weighed on Olivier so heavily that he lost his head as the examination came near. He was worn out, and paralyzed by the fear of failure, and a morbid shyness that crept over him. He trembled at the thought of appearing before the examiners in public. He had always suffered from shyness: in class he would blush and choke when he had to speak: at first he could hardly do more than answer his name. And it was much more easy for him to reply impromptu than when he knew that he was going to be questioned: the thought of it made him ill: his mind rushed ahead picturing every detail of the ordeal as it would happen: and the longer he had to wait, the more he was obsessed by it. It might be said that he passed every examination at least twice: for he passed it in his dreams on the night before and expended all his energy, so that he had none left for the real examination.

But he did not even reach the *viva voce*, the very thought of which had sent him into a cold sweat the night before. In the written examination on a philosophical subject, which at any ordinary time would have sent him flying off, he could not even manage to squeeze out a couple of pages in

six hours. For the first few hours his brain was empty; he could think of nothing, nothing. It was like a blank wall against which he hurled himself in vain. Then, an hour before the end, the wall was rent and a few rays of light shone through the crevices. He wrote an excellent short essay, but it was not enough to place him. When Antoinette saw the despair on his face as he came out, she foresaw the inevitable blow, and she was as despairing as he: but she did not show it. Even in the most desperate situations she had always an inexhaustible capacity for hope.

Olivier was rejected.

He was crushed by it. Antoinette pretended to smile as though it were nothing of any importance: but her lips trembled. She consoled her brother, and told him that it was an easily remedied misfortune, and that he would be certain to pass next year, and win a better place. She did not tell him how vital it was to her that he should have passed, that year, or how utterly worn out she felt in soul and body, or how uneasy she felt about fighting through another year like that. But she had to go on. If she were to go away before Olivier had passed he would never have the courage to go on fighting alone: he would succumb.

She concealed her weariness from him, and even redoubled her efforts. She wore herself to skin and bone to let him have amusement and change during the holidays so that he might resume work with greater energy and confidence. But at the very outset her small savings had to be broken into, and, to make matters worse, she lost some of her most profitable pupils.

Another year! . . . Within sight of the final ordeal they were almost at breaking-point. Above all, they had to live, and discover some other means of scraping along. Antoinette accepted a situation as a governess in Germany which had been offered her through the Nathans. It was the very last thing she would have thought of, but nothing else offered at the time, and she could not wait. She had never left her brother for a single day during the last six years: and she could not imagine what life would be like with-

out seeing and hearing him from day to day. Olivier was terrified when he thought of it: but he dared not say anything: it was he who had brought it about: if he had passed Antoinette would not have been reduced to such an extremity: he had no right to say anything, or to take into account his own grief at the parting: it was for her to decide.

They spent the last days together in dumb anguish, as though one of them were about to die: they hid away from each other when their sorrow was too much for them. Antoinette gazed into Olivier's eyes for counsel. If he had said to her: "Don't go!" she would have stayed, although she had to go. Up to the very last moment, in the cab in which they drove to the station, she was prepared to break her resolution: she felt that she could never go through with it. At a word from him, one word! . . . But he said nothing. Like her, he set his teeth and would not budge.—She made him promise to write to her every day, and to conceal nothing from her, and to send for her if he were ever in the least danger.

They parted. While Olivier returned with a heavy heart to his school, where it had been agreed that he should board, the train carried Antoinette, crushed and sorrowful, towards Germany. Lying awake and staring through the night they felt the minutes dragging them farther and farther apart, and they called to each other in whispering voices.

Antoinette was fearful of the new world to which she was going. She had changed much in six years. She who had once been so bold and afraid of nothing had grown so used to silence and isolation that it hurt her to go out into the world again. The laughing, gay, chattering Antoinette of the old happy times had passed away with them. Unhappiness had made her sensitive and shy. No doubt living with Olivier had infected her with his timidity. She had had hardly anybody to talk to except her brother. She was scared by the least little thing, and was really in a panic when she had to pay a call. And so it was a nervous torture to her to think that she was now going to live among strangers, to have to talk to them, to be always with them.

The poor girl had no more real vocation for teaching than her brother: she did her work conscientiously, but her heart was not in it, and she had not the support of feeling that there was any use in it. She was made to love and not to teach. And no one cared for her love.

Nowhere was her capacity for love less in demand than in her new situation in Germany. The Grünebaums, whose children she was engaged to teach French, took not the slightest interest in her. They were haughty and familiar, indifferent and indiscreet: they paid fairly well: and, as a result, they regarded everybody in their payment as being under an obligation to them, and thought they could do just as they liked. They treated Antoinette as a superior sort of servant and allowed her hardly any liberty.

She was stifled in the foreign country, where she knew nobody, and nobody was interested in her, except the wife of a professor, lately come to the town, who also felt out of her element. The good creature was kind and motherly, and sympathetic with the brother and sister who loved each other so and had to live apart—(for she had dragged part of her story out of Antoinette):—but she was so noisy, so commonplace, she was so lacking—though quite innocently—in tact and discretion that aristocratic little Antoinette was irritated and drew back. She had no one in whom she could confide and so all her troubles were pent up, and weighed heavily upon her: sometimes she thought she must give way under them: but she set her teeth and struggled on. Her health suffered: she grew very thin. Her brother's letters became more and more downhearted. In a fit of depression he wrote:

“Come back, come back, come back! . . .”

But he had hardly sent the letter off than he was ashamed of it and wrote another begging Antoinette to tear up the first and give no further thought to it. He even pretended to be in good spirits and not to be wanting his sister. It hurt his umbrageous vanity to think that he might seem incapable of doing without her.

Antoinette was not deceived: she read his every thought:

but she did not know what to do. One day she almost went to him: she went to the station to find out what time the train left for Paris. And then she said to herself that it was madness: the money she was earning was enough to pay for Olivier's board: they must hold on as long as they could. She was not strong enough to make up her mind: in the morning her courage would spring forth again: but as the day dragged towards evening her strength would fail her and she would think of flying to him. She was homesick,—longing for the country that had treated her so hardly, the country that enshrined all the relics of her past life,—and she was aching to hear the language that her brother spoke, the language in which she told her love for him.

Then it was that a company of French actors passed through the little German town. Antoinette, who rarely visited the theater—(she had neither time nor taste for it)—was seized with an irresistible longing to hear her own language spoken, to take refuge in France.

The rest is known.

There were no seats left in the theater: she met the young musician, Jean-Christophe, whom she did not know, and he, seeing her disappointment, offered to share with her a box which he had to give away: in her confusion she accepted. Her presence with Christophe set tongues wagging in the little town: and the malicious rumors came at once to the ears of the Grünebaums, who, being already inclined to believe anything ill of the young Frenchwoman dismissed Antoinette without more ado.

She, who was so chaste and modest, she, whose whole life had been absorbed by her love for her brother and never yet had been besmirched with one thought of evil, nearly died of shame, when she understood the nature of the charge against her. Not for one moment was she resentful against Christophe. She knew that he was as innocent as she, and that, if he had injured her, he had meant only to be kind: she was grateful to him. She knew nothing of him, save that he was a musician, and that he was much maligned: but, in her ignorance of life and men, she had a natural intuition about people, which unhappiness

had sharpened, and in her queer, boorish companion she had recognized a quality of candor equal to her own, and a sturdy kindness, the mere memory of which was comforting and good to think on. The evil she had heard of him did not at all affect the confidence which Christophe had inspired in her. Being herself a victim she had no doubt that he was in the same plight, suffering, as she did, though for a longer time, from the malevolence of the townspeople who insulted him. And as she always forgot herself in the thought of others the idea of what Christophe must have suffered distracted her mind a little from her own torment. Nothing in the world could have induced her to try to see him again, or to write to him: her modesty and pride forbade it. She told herself that he did not know the harm he had done, and, in her gentleness, she hoped that he would never know it.

She left Germany. An hour away from the town it chanced that the train in which she was traveling passed the train by which Christophe was returning from a neighboring town where he had been spending the day.

For a few minutes their carriages stopped opposite each other, and in the silence of the night they saw each other, but did not speak. What could they have said save a few trivial words? That would have been a profanation of the indefinable feeling of common pity and mysterious sympathy which had sprung up in them, and was based on nothing save the sureness of their inward vision. During those last moments, when, still strangers, they gazed into each other's eyes, they saw in each other things which never had appeared to any other soul among the people with whom they lived. Everything must pass: the memory of words, kisses, passionate embraces: but the contact of souls, which have once met and hailed each other amid the throng of passing shapes, that never can be blotted out. Antoinette bore it with her in the innermost recesses of her heart—that poor heart, so swathed about with sorrow and sad thoughts, from out the midst of which there smiled a misty light, which seemed to steal sweetly from the earth,

a pale and tender light like that which floods the Elysian Shades of Gluck.

She returned to Olivier. It was high time she returned to him. He had just fallen ill: and the poor, nervous, unhappy little creature who trembled at the thought of illness before it came—now that he was really ill, refused to write to his sister for fear of upsetting her. But he called to her, prayed for her coming as for a miracle.

When the miracle happened he was lying in the school infirmary, feverish and wandering. When he saw her he made no sound. How often had he seen her enter in his fevered fancy! . . . He sat up in bed, gaping, and trembling lest it should be once more only an illusion. And when she sat down on the bed by his side, when she took him in her arms and he had taken her in his, when he felt her soft cheek against his lips, and her hands still cold from traveling by night in his, when he was quite, quite sure that it was his dear sister he began to weep. He could do nothing else: he was still the "little cry-baby" that he had been when he was a child. He clung to her and held her close for fear she should go away from him again. How changed they were! How sad they looked! . . . No matter! They were together once more: everything was lit up, the infirmary, the school, the gloomy day: they clung to each other, they would never let each other go. Before she had said a word he made her swear that she would not go away again. He had no need to make her swear: no, she would never go away again: they had been too unhappy away from each other: their mother was right: anything was better than being parted. Even poverty, even death, so only they were together.

They took rooms. They wanted to take their old little flat, horrible though it was: but it was occupied. Their new rooms also looked out on to a yard: but above a wall they could see the top of a little acacia and grew fond of it at once, as a friend from the country, a prisoner like themselves, in the paved wilderness of the city. Olivier quickly

recovered his health, or rather, what he was pleased to call his health:—(for what was health to him would have been illness to a stronger boy).—Antoinette's unhappy stay in Germany had helped her to save a little money: and she made some more by the translation of a German book which a publisher accepted. For a time, then, they were free of financial anxiety: and all would be well if Olivier passed his examination at the end of the year.—But if he did not pass?

No sooner had they settled down to the happiness of being together again than they were once more obsessed by the prospect of the examination. They tried hard not to think about it, but in vain, they were always coming back to it. The fixed idea haunted them, even when they were seeking distraction from their thoughts: at concerts it would suddenly leap out at them in the middle of the performance: at night when they woke up it would lie there like a yawning gulf before them. In addition to his eagerness to please his sister and repay her for the sacrifice of her youth that she had made for his sake, Olivier lived in terror of his military service which he could not escape if he were rejected:—(at that time admission to the great schools was still admitted as an exemption from service).—He had an invincible disgust for the physical and moral promiscuity, the kind of intellectual degradation, which, rightly or wrongly, he saw in barrack-life. Every pure and aristocratic quality in him revolted from such compulsion, and it seemed to him that death would be preferable. In these days it is permitted to make light of such feelings, and even to decry them in the name of a social morality which, for the moment, has become a religion: but they are blind who deny it: there is no more profound suffering than that of the violation of moral solitude by the coarse liberal Communism of the present day.

The examinations began. Olivier was almost incapable of going in: he was unwell, and he was so fearful of the torment he would have to undergo, whether he passed or not, that he almost longed to be taken seriously ill. He did quite well in the written examination. But he had a cruel

time waiting to hear the results. Following the immemorial custom of the country of Revolutions, which is the worst country in the world for red-tape and routine, the examinations were held in July during the hottest days of the year, as though it were deliberately intended to finish off the luckless candidates, who were already staggering under the weight of cramming a monstrous list of subjects, of which even the examiners did not know a tenth part. The written examinations were held on the day after the holiday of the 14th July, when the whole city was upside down, and making merry, to the undoing of the young men who were by no means inclined to be merry, and asked for nothing but silence. In the square outside the house booths were set up, rifles cracked at the miniature ranges, merry-go-rounds creaked and grunted, and hideous steam organs roared from morning till night. The idiotic noise went on for a week. Then a President of the Republic, by way of maintaining his popularity, granted the rowdy merry-makers another three days' holiday. It cost him nothing: he did not hear the row. But Olivier and Antoinette were distracted and appalled by the noise, and had to keep their windows shut, so that their rooms were stifling, and stop their ears, trying vainly to escape the shrill, insistent, idiotic tunes which were ground out from morning till night and stabbed through their brains like daggers, so that they were reduced to a pitiful condition.

The *viva voce* examination began immediately after the publication of the first results. Olivier begged Antoinette not to go. She waited at the door,—much more anxious than he. Of course he never told her what he thought of his performance. He tormented her by telling her what he had said and what he had not said.

At last the final results were published. The names of the candidates were posted in the courtyard of the Sorbonne. Antoinette would not let Olivier go alone. As they left the house, they thought, though they did not say it, that when they came back they would *know*, and perhaps they would regret their present fears, when at least there was still hope. When they came in sight of the Sorbonne they

felt their legs give way under them. Brave little Antoinette said to her brother:

"Please not so fast. . . ."

Olivier looked at his sister, and she forced a smile. He said:

"Shall we sit down for a moment on the seat here?"

He would gladly have gone no further. But, after a moment, she pressed his hand and said:

"It's nothing, dear. Let us go on."

They could not find the list at first. They read several others in which the name of Jeannin did not appear. When at last they saw it, they did not take it in at first: they read it several times and could not believe it. Then when they were quite sure that it was true that Jeannin was Olivier, that Jeannin had passed, they could say nothing: they hurried home: she took his arm, and held his wrist, and leaned her weight on him: they almost ran, and saw nothing of what was going on about them: as they crossed the boulevard they were almost run over. They said over and over again:

"Dear. . . . Darling. . . . Dear. . . . Dear. . . ."

They tore upstairs to their rooms and then they flung their arms round each other. Antoinette took her brother's hand and led him to the photographs of their father and mother, which hung on the wall near her bed, in a corner of her room, which was a sort of sanctuary to her: they knelt down before them: and with tears in their eyes they prayed.

Antoinette ordered a jolly little dinner: but they could not eat a morsel: they were not hungry. They spent the evening, Olivier kneeling by his sister's side while she petted him like a child. They hardly spoke at all. They could not even be happy, for they were too worn out. They went to bed before nine o'clock and slept the sleep of the just.

Next day Antoinette had a frightful headache, but there was such a load taken from her heart! Olivier felt, for the first time in his life, that he could breathe freely. He was saved, she was saved, she had accomplished her task: and

he had shown himself to be not unworthy of his sister's expectations! . . . For the first time for years and years they allowed themselves a little laziness. They stayed in bed till twelve talking through the wall, with the door between their rooms open: when they looked in the mirror they saw their faces happy and tired-looking: they smiled, and threw kisses to each other, and dozed off again, and watched each other's sleep, and lay weary and worn with hardly the strength to do more than mutter tender little scraps of words.

They had to set to work to prepare Olivier's wardrobe for the *École*. Antoinette spent the last of her little store of money, and even sold some of her jewels. What did it matter? He would repay her later on. And then, she would need so little when he was gone from her! . . . She tried not to think of what it would be like when he was gone: she worked away at his clothes, and put into the work all the tenderness she had for her brother, and she had a presentiment that it would be the last thing she would do for him.

When the time came for them to part, Antoinette accompanied Olivier as far as the gates of the *École*. Then she returned. Once more she was alone. But now it was not, as when she had gone away to Germany, a separation which she could bring to an end at will when she could bear it no longer. Now it was she who remained behind, he who went away. Only on her brother's holidays—Thursday afternoons and Sundays—she would make an effort to be her old self with him.

She went to a concert at the *Châtelet* with her brother. As he had just been appointed musical critic to a little Review, they were in better places than those they occupied in old days, but the people among whom they sat were much more apathetic. They had stalls near the stage. Christophe Krafft was to play. Neither of them had ever heard of the German musician. When she saw him come on, the blood rushed to her heart. Although her tired eyes could only see him through a mist, she had no doubt when he

appeared: he was the unknown young man of her unhappy days in Germany. She had never mentioned him to her brother: and she had hardly even admitted his existence to her thoughts: she had been entirely absorbed by the anxieties of her life since then. Besides, she was a reasonable little Frenchwoman, and refused to admit the existence of an obscure feeling which she could not trace to its source, while it seemed to lead nowhere. There was in her a whole region of the soul, of unsuspected depths, wherein there slept many other feelings which she would have been ashamed to behold: she knew that they were there: but she looked away from them in a sort of religious terror of that Being within herself which lies beyond the mind's control.

When she had recovered a little, she borrowed her brother's glasses to look at Christophe: she saw him in profile at the conductor's stand, and she recognized his expression of forceful concentration. He was wearing a shabby old coat which fitted him very badly.—Antoinette sat in silent agony through the vagaries of that lamentable concert when Christophe joined issue with the unconcealed hostility of his audience, who were at the time ill-disposed towards German artists, and actively bored by his music. And when he appeared, after a symphony which had seemed unconscionably long, to play some piano music, he was received with cat-calls which left no room for doubt as to their displeasure at having to put up with him again. However, he began to play in the face of the bored resignation of his audience: but the uncomplimentary remarks exchanged in a loud voice by two men in the gallery went on, to the great delight of the rest of the audience. Then he broke off: and in a childish fit of temper he played *Malbrouck s'en va t'en guerre* with one finger, got up from the piano, faced the audience, and said:

"That is all you are fit for."

The audience were for a moment so taken aback that they did not quite take in what the musician meant. Then there was an outburst of angry protests. Followed a terrible uproar. They hissed and shouted:

"Apologize! Make him apologize!"

They were all red in the face with anger, and they blew out their fury—tried to persuade themselves that they were really enraged: as perhaps they were, but the chief thing was that they were delighted to have a chance of making a row, and letting themselves go: they were like schoolboys after a few hours in school.

Antoinette could not move: she was petrified: she sat still tugging at one of her gloves. Ever since the last bars of the symphony she had had a growing presentiment of what would happen: she felt the blind hostility of the audience, felt it growing: she read Christophe's thoughts, and she was sure he would not go through to the end without an explosion: she sat waiting for the explosion while agony grew in her: she stretched every nerve to try to prevent it; and when at last it came, it was so exactly what she had foreseen that she was overwhelmed by it, as by some fatal catastrophe against which there was nothing to be done. And as she gazed at Christophe, who was staring insolently at the howling audience, their eyes met. Christophe's eyes recognized her, greeted her, for the space of perhaps a second: but he was in such a state of excitement that his mind did not recognize her (he had not thought of her for long enough). He disappeared while the audience yelled and hissed.

She longed to cry out: to say or do something: but she was bound hand and foot, and could not stir; it was like a nightmare. It was some comfort to her to hear her brother at her side, and to know that, without having any idea of what was happening to her, he had shared her agony and indignation. Olivier was a thorough musician, and he had an independence of taste which nothing could encroach upon: when he liked a thing, he would have maintained his liking in the face of the whole world. With the very first bars of the symphony, he had felt that he was in the presence of something big, something the like of which he had never in his life come across. He went on muttering to himself with heartfelt enthusiasm:

"That's fine! That's beautiful! Beautiful!" while his sister instinctively pressed close to him, gratefully. After the

symphony he applauded loudly by way of protest against the ironic indifference of the rest of the audience. When it came to the great fiasco, he was beside himself: he stood up, shouted that Christophe was right, abused the booers, and offered to fight them: it was impossible to recognize the timid Olivier. His voice was drowned in the uproar: he was told to shut up: he was called a "snotty little kid," and told to go to bed. Antoinette saw the futility of standing up to them, and took his arm and said:

"Stop! Stop! I implore you! Stop!"

He sat down in despair, and went on muttering:

"It's shameful! Shameful! The swine! . . ."

She said nothing and bore her suffering in silence: he thought she was insensible to the music, and said:

"Antoinette, don't *you* think it beautiful?"

She nodded. She was frozen, and could not recover herself. But when the orchestra began another piece, she suddenly got up, and whispered to her brother in a tone of savage hatred:

"Come, come! I can't bear the sight of these people!"

They hurried out. They walked along arm-in-arm, and Olivier went on talking excitedly. Antoinette said nothing.

All that day and the days following she sat alone in her room, and a feeling crept over her which at first she refused to face: but then it went on and took possession of her thoughts, like the furious throbbing of the blood in her aching temples.

Some time afterwards Olivier brought her Christophe's collection of songs, which he had just found at a publisher's. She opened it at random. On the first page on which her eyes fell she read in front of a song this dedication in German:

"To my poor dear little victim," together with a date.

She knew the date well.—She was so upset that she could read no farther. She put the book down and asked her brother to play, and went and shut herself up in her room. Olivier, full of his delight in the new music, began to play without remarking his sister's emotion. Antoinette sat in

the adjoining room, striving to repress the beating of her heart. Suddenly she got up and looked through a cupboard for a little account-book in which was written the date of her departure from Germany, and the mysterious date. She knew it already: yes, it was the evening of the performance at the theater to which she had been with Christophe. She lay down on her bed and closed her eyes, blushing, with her hands folded on her breast, while she listened to the dear music. Her heart was overflowing with gratitude. . . . Ah! Why did her head hurt her so?

When Olivier saw that his sister had not come back, he went into her room after he had done playing, and found her lying there. He asked her if she were ill. She said she was rather tired, and got up to keep him company. They talked: but she did not answer his questions at once: her thoughts seemed to be far away: she smiled, and blushed, and said, by way of excuse, that her headache was making her stupid. At last Olivier went away. She had asked him to leave the book of songs. She sat up late reading them at the piano, without playing, just lightly touching a note here and there, for fear of annoying her neighbors. But for the most part she did not even read: she sat dreaming: she was carried away by a feeling of tenderness and gratitude towards the man who had pitied her, and had read her mind and soul with the mysterious intuition of true kindness. She could not fix her thoughts. She was happy and sad—sad! . . . Ah! How her head ached!

She spent the night in sweet and painful dreams, a crushing melancholy. During the day she tried to go out for a little to shake off her drowsiness. Although her head was still aching, to give herself something to do, she went and made a few purchases at a great shop. She hardly gave a thought to what she was doing. Her thoughts were always with Christophe, though she did not admit it to herself. As she came out, worried and mortally sad, through the crowd of people she saw Christophe go by on the other side of the street. He saw her, too, at the same moment. At once,—(suddenly and without thinking), she held out her hands towards him. Christophe stopped: this time he recog-

nized her. He sprang forward to cross the road to Antoinette: and Antoinette tried to go to meet him. But the insensate current of the passing throng carried her along like a windlestraw, while the horse of an omnibus, falling on the slippery asphalt, made a sort of dyke in front of Christophe, by which the opposing streams of carriages were dammed, so that for a few moments there was an impassable barrier. Christophe tried to force his way through in spite of everything: but he was trapped in the middle of the traffic, and could not move either way. When at last he did extricate himself and managed to reach the place where he had seen Antoinette, she was gone: she had struggled vainly against the human torrent that carried her along: then she yielded to it—gave up the struggle. She felt that she was dogged by some fatality which forbade the possibility of her ever meeting Christophe: against Fate there was nothing to be done. And when she did succeed in escaping from the crowd, she made no attempt to go back: she was suddenly ashamed: what could she dare to say to him? What had she done? What must he have thought of her? She fled away home.

She did not regain assurance until she reached her room. Then she sat by the table in the dark, and had not even the strength to take off her hat or her gloves. She was miserable at having been unable to speak to him: and at the same time there glowed a new light in her heart: she was unconscious of the darkness, and unconscious of the illness that was upon her. She went on and on turning over and over every detail of the scene in the street: and she changed it about and imagined what would have happened if certain things had turned out differently. She saw herself holding out her arms to Christophe, and Christophe's expression of joy as he recognized her, and she laughed and blushed. She blushed: and then in the darkness of her room, where there was no one to see her, and she could hardly see herself, once more she held out her arms to him. Her need was too strong for her: she felt that she was losing ground, and instinctively she sought to clutch at the strong vivid life that passed so near her, and gazed so

kindly at her. Her heart was full of tenderness and anguish, and through the night she cried:

"Help me! Save me!"

All in a fever she got up and lit the lamp, and took pen and paper. She wrote to Christophe. Her illness was full upon her, or she would never even have thought of writing to him, so proud she was and timid. She did not know what she wrote. She was no longer mistress of herself. She called to him, and told him that she loved him. . . . In the middle of her letter she stopped, appalled. She tried to write it all over again: but her impulse was gone: her mind was a blank, and her head was aching: she had a horrible difficulty in finding words: she was utterly worn out. She was ashamed. . . . What was the good of it all? She knew perfectly well that she was trying to trick herself, and that she would never send the letter. . . . Even if she had wished to do so, how could she? She did not know Christophe's address. . . . Poor Christophe! And what could he do for her? Even if he knew all and were kind to her, what could he do? . . . It was too late! No, no: it was all in vain, the last dying struggle of a bird, blindly, desperately beating its wings. She must be resigned to it. . . .

So for a long time she sat there by the table, lost in thought, unable to move hand or foot. It was past midnight when she struggled to her feet—bravely. Mechanically she placed the loose sheets of her letter in one of her few books, for she had the strength neither to put them in order nor to tear them up. Then she went to bed, shivering and shaking with fever. The key to the riddle lay near at hand: she felt that the will of God was to be fulfilled.—And a great peace came upon her.

On Sunday morning when Olivier came he found Antoinette in bed, delirious. A doctor was called in. He said it was acute consumption.

Antoinette had known how serious her condition was: she had discovered the cause of the moral turmoil in herself which had so alarmed her. She had been dreadfully ashamed, and it was some consolation to her to think that

not she herself but her illness was the cause of it. She had managed to take a few precautions and to burn her papers and to write a letter to Madame Nathan: she appealed to her kindness to look after her brother during the first few weeks after her "death"—(she dared not write the word). . . .

The doctor could do nothing: the disease was too far gone, and Antoinette's constitution had been wrecked by the years of hardship and unceasing toil.

Antoinette was quite calm. Since she had known that there was no hope her agony and torment had left her. She lay turning over in her mind all the trials and tribulations through which she had passed: she saw that her work was done and her dear Olivier saved: and she was filled with unutterable joy. She said to herself:

"I have achieved that."

And then she turned in shame from her pride and said:

"I could have done nothing alone. God has given me His aid."

And she thanked God that He had granted her life until she had accomplished her task. There was a catch at her heart as she thought that now she had to lay down her life: but she dared not complain: that would have been to feel ingratitude towards God, who might have called her away sooner. And what would have happened if she had passed away a year sooner?—She sighed, and humbled herself in gratitude.

In spite of her weakness and oppression she did not complain,—except when she was sleeping heavily, when every now and then she moaned like a little child. She watched things and people with a calm smile of resignation. It was always a joy to her to see Olivier. She would move her lips to call him, though she made no sound: she would want to hold his hand in hers: she would bid him lay his head on the pillow near hers, and then, gazing into his eyes, she would go on looking at him in silence. At last she would raise herself up and hold his face in her hands and say:

"Ah! Olivier! . . . Olivier! . . ."

She took the medal that she wore round her neck, and hung it on her brother's. She commended her beloved Olivier to the care of her confessor, her doctor, everybody. It seemed as though she was to live henceforth in him, that, on the point of death, she was taking refuge in his life, as upon some island in uncharted seas. Sometimes she seemed to be uplifted by a mystic exaltation of tenderness and faith, and she forgot her illness, and sadness changed to joy in her,—a joy divine indeed that shone upon her lips and in her eyes. Over and over again she said:

"I am happy. . . ."

Her senses grew dim. In her last moments of consciousness her lips moved and it seemed that she was repeating something to herself. Olivier went to her bedside and bent down over her. She recognized him once more and smiled feebly up at him: her lips went on moving and her eyes were filled with tears. They could not make out what she was trying to say. . . . But faintly Olivier heard her breathe the words of the dear old song they used to love so much, the song she was always singing:

"I will come again, my sweet and bonny, I will come again."

Then she relapsed into unconsciousness. So she passed away.

If it had come later in his life Olivier could never have borne up against such a catastrophe,—but now it was impossible for him to succumb absolutely to his despair. He had just begun a new life; he was living in a community, and had to live the common life whatever he might be feeling. The full busy life of the École, the intellectual pressure, the examinations, the struggle for life, all kept him from withdrawing into himself: he could not be alone. He suffered, but it proved his salvation. A year earlier, or a few years earlier, he must have succumbed.

But though it is sad indeed to lose the beloved at the beginning of life, it is even more terrible later on when the springs of life are running dry. Olivier was young: and, in spite of his inborn pessimism, in spite of his misfortune, he had to live his life. As often seems to happen after the

loss of those dear to us, it was as though when Antoinette passed away she had breathed part of her soul into her brother's life. And he believed it was so. Though he had not such faith as hers, yet he did arrive at a vague conviction that his sister was not dead, but lived on in him, as she had promised. There is a Breton superstition that those who die young are not dead, but stay and hover over the places where they lived until they have fulfilled the normal span of their existence.—So Antoinette lived out her life in Olivier.

He read through the papers he had found in her room. He found the fragment of the letter to Christophe, and discovered the unspoken romance which had sprung to life in her: so for the first time he happened upon her emotional life, that he had never known in her and never tried to know: he lived through the last passionate days, when, deserted by himself, she had held out her arms to the unknown friend. She had never told him that she had seen Christophe before. Certain words in her letter revealed the fact that they had met in Germany. He understood that Christophe had been kind to Antoinette, in circumstances the details of which were unknown to him, and that Antoinette's feeling for the musician dated from that day, though she had kept her secret to the end.

Christophe, whom he loved already for the beauty of his art, now became unutterably dear to him. She had loved him: it seemed to Olivier that it was she whom he loved in Christophe. He moved heaven and earth to meet him. It was not an easy matter to trace him. After his rebuff Christophe had been lost in the wilderness of Paris: he had shunned all society and no one gave a thought to him.—After many months it chanced that Olivier met Christophe in the street: he was pale and sunken from the illness from which he had only just recovered. But Olivier had not the courage to stop him. He followed him home at a distance. He wanted to write to him, but could not screw himself up to it. What was there to say? Olivier was not alone: Antoinette was with him: her love, her modesty had become a part of him: the thought that his sister had

loved Christophe made him as bashful in Christophe's presence as though he had been Antoinette. And yet how he longed to talk to him of her!—But he could not. Her secret was a seal upon his lips.

He tried to meet Christophe again. He went everywhere where he thought Christophe might be. He was longing to shake hands with him. And when he saw him he tried to hide so that Christophe should not see him.

At last Christophe saw him at the house of some mutual friends where they both happened to be one evening. Olivier stood far away from him and said nothing: but he watched him. And no doubt the spirit of Antoinette was hovering near Olivier that night: for Christophe saw her in Olivier's eyes: and it was her image, so suddenly evoked, that made him cross the room and go towards the unknown messenger, who, like a young Hermes, brought him the melancholy greeting of the blessed dead.

THE HOUSE

I

Christophe's first thought, when he awoke the day after the Roussins' party, was for Olivier Jeannin. At once he felt an irresistible longing to see him again. He got up and went out. It was not yet eight o'clock. It was a heavy and rather oppressive morning. An April day before its time: stormy clouds were hovering over Paris.

Olivier lived below the hill of Sainte-Geneviève, in a little street near the *Jardin des Plantes*. The house stood in the narrowest part of the street. The staircase led out of a dark yard, and was full of divers unpleasant smells. The stairs

wound steeply up and sloped down towards the wall, which was disfigured with scribblings in pencil. On the third floor a woman, with gray hair hanging down, and in petticoat-bodice, gaping at the neck, opened the door when she heard footsteps on the stairs, and slammed it to when she saw Christophe. There were several flats on each landing, and through the ill-fitting doors Christophe could hear children romping and squalling. The place was a swarming heap of dull base creatures, living as it were on shelves, one above the other, in that low-storied house, built round a narrow, evil-smelling yard. Christophe was disgusted, and wondered what lusts and covetous desires could have drawn so many creatures to this place, far from the fields, where at least there is air enough for all, and what it could profit them in the end to be in the city of Paris, where all their lives they were condemned to live in such a sepulcher.

He reached Olivier's landing. A knotted piece of string was his bell-pull. Christophe tugged at it so mightily that at the noise several doors on the staircase were half opened. Olivier came to the door. Christophe was struck by the careful simplicity of his dress: and the neatness of it, which at any other time would have been little to his liking, was in that place an agreeable surprise: in such an atmosphere of foulness there was something charming and healthy about it. And at once he felt just as he had done the night before when he gazed into Olivier's clear, honest eyes. He held out his hand: but Olivier was overcome with shyness, and murmured:

"You . . . You here!"

Christophe was engrossed in catching at the lovable quality of the man as it was revealed to him in that fleeting moment of embarrassment, and he only smiled in answer. He moved forward and forced Olivier backward, and entered the one room in which he both slept and worked. An iron bedstead stood against the wall near the window; Christophe noticed the pillows heaped up on the bolster. There were three chairs, a black-painted table, a small piano, bookshelves and books, and that was all. The room was cramped, low, ill-lighted: and yet there was in it a ray

of the pure light that shone in the eyes of its owner. Everything was clean and tidy, as though a woman's hands had dealt with it: and a few roses in a vase brought spring-time into the room, the walls of which were decorated with photographs of old Florentine pictures.

"So. . . . You. . . . You have come to see me?" said Olivier warmly.

"Good lord, I had to!" said Christophe. "You would never have come to me?"

"You think not?" replied Olivier.

Then, quickly:

"Yes, you are right. But it would not be for want of thinking of it."

"What would have stopped you?"

"Wanting to too much."

"That's a fine reason!"

"Yes. Don't laugh. I was afraid you would not want it as much as I."

"A lot that's worried me! I wanted to see you, and here I am. If it bores you, I shall know at once."

"You will have to have good eyes."

They smiled at each other.

Olivier went on:

"I was an ass last night. I was afraid I might have offended you. My shyness is absolutely a disease: I can't get a word out."

"I shouldn't worry about that. There are plenty of talkers in your country: one is only too glad to meet a man who is silent occasionally, even though it be only from shyness and in spite of himself."

Christophe laughed and chuckled over his own gibe.

"Then you have come to see me because I can be silent?"

"Yes. For your silence, the sort of silence that is yours. There are all sorts: and I like yours, and that's all there is to say."

"But how could you sympathize with me? You hardly saw me."

"That's my affair. It doesn't take me long to make up my mind. When I see a face that I like in the crowd, I know

what to do: I go after it: I simply have to know the owner of it."

"And don't you ever make mistakes when you go after them?"

"Often."

"Perhaps you have made a mistake this time."

"We shall see."

"Ah! In that case I'm done! You terrify me. If I think you are watching me, I shall lose what little wits I have."

With fond and eager curiosity Christophe watched the sensitive, mobile face, which blushed and went pale by turns. Emotion showed fleeting across it like the shadows of clouds on a lake.

"What a nervous youngster it is!" he thought. "He is like a woman."

He touched his knee.

"Come, come!" he said. "Do you think I should come to you with weapons concealed about me? I have a horror of people who practise their psychology on their friends. I only ask that we should both be open and sincere, and frankly and without shame, and without being afraid of committing ourselves finally to anything or of any sort of contradiction, be true to what we feel. I ask only the right to love now, and next minute, if needs must, to be out of love. There's loyalty and manliness in that, isn't there?"

Olivier gazed at him with serious eyes, and replied:

"No doubt. It is the more manly part, and you are strong enough. But I don't think I am."

"I'm sure you are," said Christophe; "but in a different way. And then, I've come just to help you to be strong, if you want to be so. For what I have just said gives me leave to go on and say, with more frankness than I should otherwise have had, that—without prejudice for to-morrow—I love you."

Olivier blushed hotly. He was struck dumb with embarrassment, and could not speak.

Christophe glanced round the room.

"It's a poor place you live in. Haven't you another room?"

"Only a lumber-room."

"Ugh! I can't breathe. How do you manage to live here?"

"One does it somehow."

"I couldn't—never."

Christophe unbuttoned his waistcoat and took a long breath.

Olivier went and opened the window wide.

"You must be very unhappy in a town, M. Krafft. But there's no danger of my suffering from too much vitality. I breathe so little that I can live anywhere. And yet there are nights in summer when even I am hard put to it to get through. I'm terrified when I see them coming. Then I stay sitting up in bed, and I'm almost stifled."

Christophe looked at the heap of pillows on the bed, and from them to Olivier's worn face: and he could see him struggling there in the darkness.

"Leave it," he said. "Why do you stay?"

Olivier shrugged his shoulders and replied carelessly:

"It doesn't matter where I live."

Heavy footsteps padded across the floor above them. In the room below a shrill argument was toward. And always, without ceasing, the walls were shaken by the rumbling of the buses in the street.

"And the house!" Christophe went on. "The house reeking of filth, the hot dirtiness of it all, the shameful poverty—how can you bring yourself to come back to it night after night? Don't you lose heart with it all? I couldn't live in it for a moment. I'd rather sleep under an arch."

"Yes. I felt all that at first, and suffered. I was just as disgusted as you are. When I went for walks as a boy, the mere sight of some of the crowded dirty streets made me ill. They gave me all sorts of fantastic horrors, which I dared not speak of. I used to think: 'If there were an earthquake now, I should be dead, and stay here for ever and ever'; and that seemed to me the most appalling thing that could happen. I never thought that one day I should live in one of them of my own free-will, and that in all probability I shall die there. And then it became easier to put up with: it had to. It still revolts me: but I try not to think of it. When I climb the stairs I close my eyes, and stop my ears,

and hold my nose, and shut off all my senses and withdraw utterly into myself. And then, over the roof there, I can see the tops of the branches of an acacia. I sit here in this corner so that I don't see anything else: and in the evening when the wind rustles through them I fancy that I am far away from Paris: and the mighty roar of a forest has never seemed so sweet to me as the gentle murmuring of those few frail leaves at certain moments."

"Yes," said Christophe. "I've no doubt that you are always dreaming; but it's all wrong to waste your fancy in such a struggle against the sordid things of life, when you might be using it in the creation of other lives."

"Isn't it the common lot? Don't you yourself waste energy in anger and bitter struggles?"

"That's not the same thing. It's natural to me: what I was born for. Look at my arms and hands! Fighting is the breath of life to me. But you haven't any too much strength: that's obvious."

Olivier looked sadly down at his thin wrists, and said:

"Yes. I am weak: I always have been. But what can I do? One must live?"

"How do you make your living?"

"I teach."

"Teach what?"

"Everything—Latin, Greek, history. I coach for degrees. And I lecture on Moral Philosophy at the Municipal School."

"Lecture on what?"

"Moral Philosophy."

"What in thunder is that? Do they teach morality in French schools?"

Olivier smiled:

"Of course."

"Is there enough in it to keep you talking for ten minutes?"

"I have to lecture for twelve hours a week."

"Do you teach them to do evil, then?"

"What do you mean?"

"There's no need for so much talk to find out what good is."

"Or to leave it undiscovered either."

"Good gracious, yes! Leave it undiscovered. There are worse ways of doing good than knowing nothing about it. Good isn't a matter of knowledge: it's a matter of action. It's only your neurasthenics who go haggling about morality: and the first of all moral laws is not to be neurasthenic. Rotten pedants! They are like cripples teaching people how to walk."

"But they don't do their talking for such as you. You *know*: but there are so many who do not know!"

"Well, let them crawl like children until they learn how to walk by themselves. But whether they go on two legs or on all fours, the first thing, the only thing you can ask is that they should walk somehow."

He was prowling round and round and up and down the room, though less than four strides took him across it. He stopped in front of the piano, opened it, turned over the pages of some music, touched the keys, and said:

"Play me something."

Olivier started.

"I!" he said. "What an idea!"

"Madame Roussin told me you were a good musician. Come: play me something."

"With you listening? Oh!" he said, "I should die."

The sincerity and simplicity with which he spoke made Christophe laugh: Olivier, too, though rather bashfully.

"Well," said Christophe, "is that a reason for a Frenchman?"

Olivier still drew back.

"But why? Why do you want me to?"

"I'll tell you presently. Play!"

"What?"

"Anything you like."

Olivier sat down at the piano with a sigh, and, obedient to the imperious will of the friend who had sought him out, he began to play the beautiful *Adagio in B Minor* of Mozart.

At first his fingers trembled so that he could hardly make them press down the keys: but he regained courage little by little: and, while he thought he was but repeating Mozart's utterance, he unwittingly revealed his inmost heart. Music is an indiscreet confidant: it betrays the most secret thoughts of its lovers to those who love it. Through the godlike scheme of the *Adagio* of Mozart Christophe could perceive the invisible lines of the character, not of Mozart, but of his new friend sitting there by the piano: the serene melancholy, the timid, tender smile of the boy, so nervous, so pure, so full of love, so ready to blush. But he had hardly reached the end of the air, the topmost point where the melody of sorrowful love ascends and snaps, when a sudden irrepressible feeling of shame and modesty overcame Olivier, so that he could not go on: his fingers would not move, and his voice failed him. His hands fell by his side, and he said:

"I can't play any more. . . ."

Christophe was standing behind him, and he stooped and reached over him and finished the broken melody: then he said:

"Now I know the music of your soul."

He held his hands, and stayed for a long time gazing into his face. At last he said:

"How queer it is! . . . I have seen you before. . . . I know you so well, and I have known you so long! . . ."

Olivier's lips trembled: he was on the point of speaking. But he said nothing.

Christophe went on gazing at him for a moment or two longer. Then he smiled and said no more, and went away.

They decided to take rooms together. In the Montparnasse quarter, near the *Place Denfert*, on the fifth floor of an old house they had found a flat of three rooms and a kitchen, all very small, and looking on to a tiny garden inclosed by four high walls. From their windows they looked out over the opposite wall, which was lower than the rest, on to one of those large convent gardens which are still to

be found in Paris, hidden and unknown. Not a soul was to be seen in the deserted avenues. The old trees, taller and more leafy than those in the Luxembourg Gardens, trembled in the sunlight.

Then for the two of them there began a period of absolute happiness. Their happiness lay not in any one thing, but in all things at once: their every thought, their every act, were steeped in it, and it never left them for a moment.

A few months after they had taken up their quarters Olivier caught cold and had to stay in bed. Christophe, who had become quite motherly, nursed him with fond anxiety: and the doctor, who, on examining Olivier, had found a little inflammation at the top of the lungs, told Christophe to smear the invalid's chest with tincture of iodine. As Christophe was gravely acquitting himself of the task he saw a confirmation medal hanging from Olivier's neck. He was familiar enough with Olivier to know that he was even more emancipated in matters of religion than himself. He could not refrain from showing his surprise. Olivier colored and said:

"It is a souvenir. My poor sister Antoinette was wearing it when she died."

Christophe trembled. The name of Antoinette struck him like a flash of lightning.

"Antoinette?" he said.

"My sister," said Olivier.

Christophe repeated:

"Antoinette . . . Antoinette Jeannin. . . . She was your sister?"

Olivier smiled sadly.

"Ah!" said Christophe, who was greatly moved. "And she was in Germany, was she not?"

Olivier nodded.

Christophe took Olivier's hands in his.

"I knew her," he said.

"Yes, I know," replied Olivier.

And he flung his arms round Christophe's neck.

"Poor girl! Poor girl!" said Christophe over and over again.

They were both in tears.

Christophe remembered then that Olivier was ill. He tried to calm him, and made him keep his arms inside the bed, and tucked the clothes up round his shoulders, and dried his eyes for him, and then sat down by the bedside and looked long at him.

"You see," he said, "that is how I knew you. I recognized you at once, that first evening."

(It were hard to tell whether he was speaking of the present or the absent friend.)

"But," he went on a moment later, "you knew? . . . Why didn't you tell me?"

And through Olivier's eyes Antoinette replied:

"I could not tell you. You had to see it for yourself."

They said nothing for some time: then, in the silence of the night, Olivier, lying still in bed, in a low voice told Christophe, who held his hand, poor Antoinette's story:—but he did not tell him what he had no right to tell; the secret that she had kept locked,—the secret that perhaps Christophe knew already without needing to be told.

From that time on the soul of Antoinette was ever near them. When they were together she was with them. They had no need to think of her: every thought they shared was shared with her too. Her love was the meeting-place wherein their two hearts were united.

Often Olivier would conjure up the image of her: scraps of memory and brief anecdotes. In their fleeting light they gave a glimpse of her shy, gracious gestures, her grave, young smile, the pensive, wistful grace that was so natural to her. Christophe would listen without a word and let the light of the unseen friend pierce to his very soul. In obedience to the law of his own nature, which everywhere and always drank in life more greedily than any other, he would sometimes hear in Olivier's words depths of sound which Olivier himself could not hear: and more than Olivier he would assimilate the essence of the girl who was dead.

Instinctively he supplied her place in Olivier's life: and it was a touching sight to see the awkward German hap un-

wittingly on certain of the delicate attentions and little mothering ways of Antoinette. Sometimes he could not tell whether it was Olivier that he loved in Antoinette or Antoinette in Olivier. Sometimes on a tender impulse, without saying anything, he would go and visit Antoinette's grave and lay flowers on it. It was some time before Olivier had any idea of it. He did not discover it until one day when he found fresh flowers on the grave: but he had some difficulty in proving that it was Christophe who had laid them there. When he tried bashfully to speak about it Christophe cut him short roughly and abruptly. He did not want Olivier to know: and he stuck to it until one day when they met in the cemetery at Ivry.

Olivier, on his part, used to write to Christophe's mother without letting him know. He gave Louisa news of her son, and told her how fond he was of him and how he admired him. Louisa would send Olivier awkward, humble letters in which she thanked him profusely: she used always to write of her son as though he were a little boy.

After a period of fond semi-silence—"a delicious time of peace and enjoyment without knowing why,"—their tongues were loosed. They spent hours in voyages of discovery, each in the other's soul.

They were very different, but they both were pure metal. They loved each other because they were so different though so much the same.

Their friendship was profitable to both of them. Love lends wings to the soul. The presence of the beloved friend gives all its worth to life: a man lives for his friend and for his sake defends his soul's integrity against the wearing force of time.

Each enriched the other's nature. Olivier had serenity of mind and a sickly body. Christophe had mighty strength and a stormy soul. They were in some sort like a blind man and a cripple. Now that they were together they felt sound and strong.

II

Christophe and Olivier were very poor. Their resources were almost nil. Christophe had only the copying and transcriptions of music given him by Hecht. Olivier had very unwisely thrown up his post at the University during the period of depression following on his sister's death.

The two friends found it very difficult to better their lot. Their love for each other made them do many stupid things. Christophe got into debt over getting a volume of Olivier's poems published secretly, and not a single copy was sold. Olivier induced Christophe to give a concert, and hardly anybody came to it. Faced with the empty hall, Christophe consoled himself bravely with Handel's quip: "Splendid! My music will sound all the better. . . ." But these bold attempts did not repay the money they cost: and they would go back to their rooms full of indignation at the indifference of the world.

In their difficulties the only man who came to their aid was a Jew, a man of forty, named Taddée Mooch. He kept an art-photograph shop: but although he was interested in his trade and brought much taste and skill to bear on it, he was interested in so many things outside it that he was apt to neglect his business for them. When he did attend to his business he was chiefly engaged in perfecting technical devices, and he would lose his head over new reproduction processes, which, in spite of their ingenuity, hardly ever succeeded, and always cost him a great deal of money. He was a voracious reader, and was always hard on the heels of every new idea in philosophy, art, science, and politics: he had an amazing knack of finding out men of originality and independence of character: it was as though he answered to their magnetism. He was a sort of connecting-link between Olivier's friends, who were all as isolated as himself, and all working in their several directions. He used to go from one to the other, and through him there was established between

them a complete circuit of ideas, though neither he nor they had any notion of it.

He had such a kindly expression that Christophe was touched by it. Above all, he was very simple, and never talked too much. He never paid exaggerated compliments, but just dropped the right word, pat. He was very eager to be of service, and before any kindness was asked of him it would be done. He came often, too often; and he almost always brought good news: work for one or other of them, a commission for an article or a lecture for Olivier, or music-lessons for Christophe. He never stayed long. It was a sort of affectation with him never to intrude. Perhaps he saw Christophe's irritation, for his first impulse was always towards an ejaculation of impatience when he saw the bearded face of the Carthaginian idol,—(he used to call him "Moloch")—appear round the door: but the next moment it would be gone, and he would feel nothing but gratitude for his perfect kindness.

Kindness with Mooch was an active passion. He was always ready to devote himself to some cause or person: to his poor co-religionists, to the Russian refugees, to the oppressed of every nation, to unfortunate artists, to the alleviation of every kind of misfortune, to every generous cause. His purse was always open: and however thinly lined it might be, he could always manage to squeeze a mite out of it: when it was empty he would squeeze the mite out of some one else's purse: if he could do any one a service no pains were too great for him to take, no distance was too far for him to go. He did it simply—with exaggerated simplicity. He was a little apt to talk too much about his simplicity and sincerity: but the great thing was that he was both simple and sincere.

He labored to such effect that he managed to induce Hecht to publish Christophe's *David* and some other compositions. Hecht appreciated Christophe's talent, but he was in no hurry to reveal it to the world. It was not until he saw that Mooch was on the point of arranging the publication at his own expense with another firm that he took the initiative out of vanity.

At that time Christophe was in a condition in which all the elements of his life were perfectly balanced. He did not bother his head with esthetic discussions as to the value of this or that musical form, nor with reasoned attempts to create a new form: he did not even have to cast about for subjects for translation into music. One thing was as good as another. The flood of music welled forth without Christophe knowing exactly what feeling he was expressing. He was happy: that was all: happy in expanding, happy in having expanded, happy in feeling within himself the pulse of universal life.

His fullness of joy was communicated to those about him.

The house with its closed garden was too small for him. He had the view out over the garden of the neighboring convent with the solitude of its great avenues and century-old trees: but it was too good to last. In front of Christophe's windows they were building a six-story house, which shut out the view and completely hemmed him in. Olivier did not complain much: he could quite easily adapt himself to a limited horizon: he was like the stoye of Descartes, from which the suppressed ideas darted upward to the free sky. But Christophe needed more air. Shut up in that confined space, he avenged himself by expanding into the lives of those about him. He drank in their inmost life, and turned it into music. Olivier used to tell him that he looked like a lover.

"If I were in love," Christophe would reply, "I should see nothing, love nothing, be interested in nothing outside my love."

"What is the matter with you, then?"

"I'm very well. I'm hungry."

"Lucky Christophe!" Olivier would sigh. "I wish you could hand a little of your appetite over to me."

Health, like sickness, is contagious. The first to feel the benefit of Christophe's vitality was naturally Olivier. Vitality was what he most lacked. He retired from the world because its vulgarity revolted him. Brilliantly clever though he was, and in spite of his exceptional artistic gifts, he was too

delicate to be a great artist. Great artists do not feel disgust: the first law for every healthy being is to live: and that law is even more imperative for a man of genius: for such a man lives more. Olivier fled from life: he drifted along in a world of poetic fictions that had no body, no flesh and blood, no relation to reality. He was one of those literary men who, in quest of beauty, have to go outside time, into the days that are no more, or the days that have never been. As though the wine of life were not as intoxicating, and its vintages as rich nowadays as ever they were! But men who are weary in soul recoil from direct contact with life: they can only bear to see it through the veil of visions spun by the backward movement of time, and hear it in the echo which sends back and distorts the dead words of those who were once alive.—Christophe's friendship gradually dragged Olivier out of this Limbo of art. The sun's rays pierced through to the innermost recesses of his soul in which he was languishing.

Christophe flung himself into creative work with tenfold vigor. He dragged Olivier after him. In reaction against their recent gloomy thoughts they had begun to collaborate in a Rabelaisian epic. It was colored by that broad materialism which follows on periods of moral stress. To the legendary heroes—Gargantua, Friar John, Panurge—Olivier had added, on Christophe's inspiration, a new character, a peasant, Jacques Patience, simple, cunning, sly, resigned, who was the butt of the others, putting up with it when he was thrashed and robbed,—putting up with it when they made love to his wife, and laid waste his fields,—tirelessly putting his house in order and cultivating his land,—forced to follow the others to war, bearing the burden of the baggage, coming in for all the kicks, and still putting up with it,—waiting, laughing at the exploits of his masters and the thrashings they gave him, and saying, "They can't go on for ever," foreseeing their ultimate downfall, looking out for it out of the corner of his eye, and silently laughing at the thought of it, with his great mouth agape. One fine day it turned out that Gargantua and Friar

John were drowned while they were away on a crusade. Patience honestly regretted their loss, merrily took heart of grace, saved Panurge, who was drowning also, and said:

"I know that you will go on playing your tricks on me: you don't take me in: but I can't do without you: you drive away the spleen, and make me laugh."

Christophe set the poem to music with great symphonic pictures, with soli and chorus, mock-heroic battles, riotous country fairs, vocal buffooneries, madrigals à la Jannequin, with tremendous childlike glee, a storm at sea, the Island of Bells, and, finally, a pastoral symphony, full of the air of the fields, and the blithe serenity of the flutes and oboes, and the clean-souled folksongs of Old France.—The friends worked away with boundless delight. The weakly Olivier, with his pale cheeks, found new health in Christophe's health. Gusts of wind blew through their garret. The very intoxication of Joy! To be working together, heart to heart with one's friend! The embrace of two lovers is not sweeter or more ardent than such a yoking together of two kindred souls. They were so near in sympathy that often the same ideas would flash upon them at the same moment. Or Christophe would write the music for a scene for which Olivier would immediately find words. Christophe impetuously dragged Olivier along in his wake. His mind swamped that of his friend, and made it fruitful.

The joy of creation was enhanced by that of success. Hecht had just made up his mind to publish the *David*: and the score, well launched, had had an instantaneous success abroad. A great Wagnerian *Kapellmeister*, a friend of Hecht's, who had settled in England, was enthusiastic about it: he had given it at several of his concerts with considerable success, which, with the *Kappellmeister's* enthusiasm, had carried it over to Germany, where also the *David* had been played. The *Kapellmeister* had entered into correspondence with Christophe, and had asked him for more of his compositions, offered to do anything he could to help him, and was engaged in ardent propaganda in his cause. The *Frankfurter Zeitung* was the first to publish an enthusiastic article. Others followed. Then, in France, a few people be-

gan to be aware that they had a great musician in their midst. One of the Parisian conductors asked Christophe for his Rabelaisian epic before it was finished: and Goujart, perceiving his approaching fame, began to speak mysteriously of a friend of his who was a genius, and had been discovered by himself. He wrote a laudatory article about the admirable *David*,—entirely forgetting that only the year before he had decried it in a short notice of a few lines. Nobody else remembered it either or seemed to be in the least astonished at his sudden change. There are so many people in Paris who are now loud in their praises of Wagner and César Franck, where formerly they roundly abused them, and actually use the fame of these men to crush those new artists whom to-morrow they will be lauding to the skies!

Christophe did not set any great store on his success. He knew that he would one day win through: but he had not thought that the day could be so near at hand: and he was distrustful of so rapid a triumph. He shrugged his shoulders, and said that he wanted to be left alone. He could have understood people applauding the *David* the year before, when he wrote it: but now he was so far beyond it; he had climbed higher. He was inclined to say to the people who came and talked about his old work:

“Don’t worry me with that stuff. It disgusts me. So do you.”

And he plunged into his new work again, rather annoyed at having been disturbed. However, he did feel a certain secret satisfaction. The first rays of the light of fame are very sweet. It is good, it is healthy, to conquer. It is like the open window and the first sweet scents of the spring coming into a house.

Just when Christophe, after years of struggling, at last opened up a calmer horizon, with victory in the distance, he had a letter from Germany.

It was in the afternoon. He was washing his face and talking gaily to Olivier in the next room, when the house-keeper slipped an envelope under the door. His mother’s

writing. . . . He had been just on the point of writing to her, and was happy at the thought of being able to tell her of his success, which would give her so much pleasure. He opened the letter. There were only a few lines. How shaky the writing was!

"My dear boy, I am not very well. If it were possible, I should like to see you again. Love.

"MOTHER."

Christophe gave a groan. Olivier, who was working in the next room, ran to him in alarm. Christophe could not speak, and pointed to the letter on the table. He went on groaning and did not listen to what Olivier said, who took in the letter at a glance, and tried to comfort him. He had to look after Christophe, just like a child, until it was time for him to go. He took him to the station, and never left him until the train began to move.

In the darkness into which he was rushing Christophe sat wide-eyed, staring straight in front of him and thinking:

"Shall I be in time?"

He knew that his mother must have been unable to wait for her to write to him. And in his fevered anxiety he was impatient of the jolting speed of the express. He reproached himself bitterly for having left Louisa. And at the same time he felt how vain were his reproaches: he had no power to change the course of events.

It was hardly dawn when he reached the little German town. He had to take care not to be recognized, for there was still a warrant of arrest out against him. But nobody at the station took any notice of him: the town was asleep.

When he saw his old home he was obliged to stop and put his hand to his lips to keep himself from crying out. How would he find his mother, his mother whom he had deserted? . . . He took a long breath and almost ran to the door. It was ajar. He pushed it open. No one there. . . . The old wooden staircase creaked under his footsteps. He went

up to the top floor. The house seemed to be empty. The door of his mother's room was shut.

Christophe's heart thumped as he laid his hand on the doorknob. And he had not the strength to open it. . . .

Louisa was alone, in bed, feeling that the end was near. Of her two other sons, Rodolphe, the business man, had settled in Hamburg, the other, Ernest, had emigrated to America, and no one knew what had become of him. There was no one to attend to her except a woman in the house, who came twice a day to see if Louisa wanted anything, stayed for a few minutes, and then went about her business: she was not very punctual, and was often late in coming. To Louisa it seemed quite natural that she should be forgotten, as it seemed to her quite natural to be ill. She was used to suffering, and was as patient as an angel. She had heart disease and palpitations, during which she would think she was going to die: she would lie with her eyes wide open, and her hands clutching the bedclothes, and the sweat dripping down her face. She never complained. She knew that it must be so. She was ready: she had already received the sacrament. She had only one anxiety: lest God should find her unworthy to enter into Paradise. She endured everything else in patience.

In a dark corner of her little room, near her pillow, on the wall of the recess, she had made a little shrine for her relics and trophies: she had collected the portraits of those who were dear to her: her three children, her husband, for whose memory she had always preserved her love in its first freshness, the old grandfather, and her brother, Gottfried: she was touchingly devoted to all those who had been kind to her, though it were ever so little. On her coverlet, close to her eyes, she had pinned the last photograph of himself that Christophe had sent her: and his last letters were under her pillow. She had a love of neatness and scrupulous tidiness, and it hurt her to know that everything was not perfectly in order in her room. She listened for the little noises outside which marked the different moments of the

day for her. It was so long since she had first heard them! All her life had been spent in that narrow space. . . . She thought of her dear Christophe. How she longed for him to be there, near her, just then! And yet she was resigned even to his absence. She was sure that she would see him again on high. She had only to close her eyes to see him. She spent days and days, half-unconscious, living in the past. . . .

She would see once more the old house on the banks of the Rhine. . . . A holiday. . . . A superb summer day. The window was open: the white road lay gleaming under the sun. They could hear the birds singing. Melchior and the old grandfather were sitting by the front-door smoking, and chatting and laughing uproariously. Louisa could not see them: but she was glad that her husband was at home that day, and that grandfather was in such a good temper. She was in the basement, cooking the dinner: an excellent dinner: she watched over it as the apple of her eye: there was a surprise: a chestnut cake, already she could hear the boy's shout of delight. . . . The boy, where was he? Upstairs: she could hear him practising at the piano. She could not make out what he was playing, but she was glad to hear the familiar tinkling sounds, and to know that he was sitting there with his grave face. . . . What a lovely day! The merry jingling bells of a carriage went by on the road. . . . Oh! good heavens! The joint! Perhaps it had been burned while she was looking out of the window! She trembled lest grandfather, of whom she was so fond, though she was afraid of him, should be dissatisfied, and scold her. . . . Thank Heaven! there was no harm done. There, everything was ready, and the table was laid. She called Melchior and grandfather. They replied eagerly. And the boy? . . . He had stopped playing. His music had ceased a moment ago without her noticing it. . . .—"Christophe!" . . . What was he doing? There was not a sound to be heard. He was always forgetting to come down to dinner: father was going to scold him. She ran upstairs. . . .—"Christophe!" . . . He made no sound. She opened the door of the room where he was practising. No one there. The room was empty, and the

piano was closed. . . . Louisa was seized with a sudden panic. What had become of him? The window was open. Oh, Heaven! Perhaps he had fallen out! Louisa's heart stops. She leans out and looks down. . . .—"Christophe!" . . . He is nowhere to be found. She rushes all over the house. Downstairs grandfather shouts to her: "Come along; don't worry; he'll come back." She will not go down: she knows that he is there: that he is hiding for fun, to tease her. Oh, naughty, naughty boy! . . . Yes, she is sure of it now: she heard the floor creak: he is behind the door. She tries to open the door. But the key is gone. The key! She rummages through a drawer, looking for it in a heap of keys. This one, that. . . . No, not that. . . . Ah, that's it! . . . She cannot fit it into the lock, her hand is trembling so. She is in such haste: she must be quick. Why? She does not know, but she knows that she must be quick, and that if she doesn't hurry she will be too late. She hears Christophe breathing on the other side of the door. . . . Oh, bother the key! . . . At last! The door is opened. A cry of joy. It is he. He flings his arms round her neck. . . . Oh, naughty, naughty, good, darling boy! . . .

She has opened her eyes. He is there, standing by her.

For some time he had been standing looking at her; so changed she was, with her face both drawn and swollen, and her mute suffering made her smile of recognition so infinitely touching: and the silence, and her utter loneliness. . . . It rent his heart. . . .

She saw him. She was not surprised. She smiled all that she could not say, a smile of boundless tenderness. She could not hold out her arms to him, nor utter a single word. He flung his arms round her neck and kissed her, and she kissed him: great tears were trickling down her cheeks. She said in a whisper:

"Wait. . . ."

He saw that she could not breathe.

Neither stirred. She stroked his head with her hands, and her tears went on trickling down her cheeks. He kissed her hands and sobbed, with his face hidden in the coverlet.

When her attack had passed she tried to speak. But she

could not find words: she floundered, and he could hardly understand her. But what did it matter? They loved each other, and were together, and could touch each other: that was the main thing.—He asked indignantly why she was left alone. She made excuses for her nurse:

“She cannot always be here: she has her work to do. . . .”

In a faint, broken voice,—she could hardly pronounce her words,—she made a little hurried request about her burial. She told Christophe to give her love to her two other sons who had forgotten her. And she sent a message to Olivier, knowing his love for Christophe. She begged Christophe to tell him that she sent him her blessing—(and then, timidly, she recollected herself, and made use of a more humble expression),—“her affectionate respects. . . .”

Once more she choked. He helped her to sit up in her bed. The sweat dripped down her face. She forced herself to smile. She told herself that she had nothing more to wish for in the world, now that she had her son’s hand clasped in hers.

And suddenly Christophe felt her hand stiffen in his. Louisa opened her lips. She looked at her son with infinite tenderness:—so the end came.

III

In the evening of the same day Olivier arrived. He had been unable to bear the thought of leaving Christophe alone in those tragic hours of which he had had only too much experience. He was fearful also of the risks his friend was running in returning to Germany. He wanted to be with him, to look after him.

Olivier’s arrival was a great boon to Christophe. He had spent the day, prostrated with grief, alone by his mother’s body. The nurse had come, performed certain offices, and then had gone away and had never come back. The hours had passed in the stillness of death. Christophe sat there, as still as the body: he never took his eyes from his mother’s face: he did not weep, he did not think, he was himself as

one dead.—Olivier's wonderful act of friendship brought him back to tears and life.

They clasped each other in a long embrace, and then sat by the dead woman's side and talked in whispers. Night had fallen. Christophe, with his arms on the foot of the bed, told random tales of his childhood's memories, in which his mother's image ever recurred. He would pause every now and then for a few minutes, and then go on again, until there came a pause when he stopped altogether, and his face dropped into his hands: he was utterly worn out: and when Olivier went up to him, he saw that he was asleep. Then he kept watch alone. And presently he, too, was overcome by sleep, with his head leaning against the back of the bed. There was a soft smile on Louisa's face, and she seemed happy to be watching over her two children.

In the early hours of the morning they were awakened by a knocking at the door. Christophe opened it. It was a neighbor, a joiner, who had come to warn Christophe that his presence in the town had been denounced, and that he must go, if he did not wish to be arrested. Christophe refused to fly: he would not leave his mother before he had taken her to her last resting-place. But Olivier begged him to go, and promised that he would faithfully watch over her in his stead: he induced him to leave the house: and, to make sure of his not going back on his decision, went with him to the station. Christophe refused point-blank to go without having a sight of the great river, by which he had spent his childhood, the mighty echo of which was preserved for ever within his soul as in a sea-shell. Though it was dangerous for him to be seen in the town, yet for his whim he disregarded it. They walked along the steep bank of the Rhine, which was rushing along in its mighty peace, between its low banks, on to its mysterious death in the sands of the North. A great iron bridge, looming in the mist, plunged its two arches, like the halves of the wheels of a colossal chariot, into the gray waters. In the distance, fading into the mist, were ships sailing through the meadows along the river's windings. It was like a dream, and Chris-

tophe was lost in it. Olivier brought him back to his senses, and, taking his arm, led him back to the station. Christophe submitted: he was like a man walking in his sleep. Olivier put him into the train as it was just starting, and they arranged to meet next day at the first French station, so that Christophe should not have to go back to Paris alone.

The train went, and Olivier returned to the house, where he found two policemen stationed at the door, waiting for Christophe to come back. They took Olivier for him, and Olivier did not hurry to explain a mistake so favorable to Christophe's chances of escape. On the other hand, the police were not in the least discomfited by their blunder, and showed no great zest in pursuing the fugitive, and Olivier had an inkling that at bottom they were not at all sorry that Christophe had gone.

Olivier stayed until the next morning, when Louisa was buried. Christophe's brother, Rodolphe, the business man, came by one train and left by the next. That important personage followed the funeral very correctly, and went immediately it was over, without addressing a single word to Olivier, either to ask him for news of his brother or to thank him for what he had done for their mother. Olivier spent a few hours more in the town, where he did not know a soul, though it was peopled for him with so many familiar shadows: the boy Christophe, those whom he had loved, and those who had made him suffer;—and dear Antoinette. . . . What was there left of all those human beings, who had lived in the town, the family of the Kraffts, that now had ceased to be? Only the love for them that lived in the heart of a stranger.

In the afternoon Olivier met Christophe at the frontier station as they had arranged. It was a village nestling among wooded hills. Instead of waiting for the next train to Paris, they decided to go part of the way on foot, as far as the nearest town. They wanted to be alone. They set out through the silent woods, through which from a distance there resounded the dull thud of an ax. They reached a clearing at the top of a hill. Below them, in a narrow valley,

in German territory, there lay the red roof of a forester's house, and a little meadow like a green lake amid the trees. All around there stretched the dark-blue sea of the forest wrapped in cloud. Mists hovered and drifted among the branches of the pines. A transparent veil softened the lines and blurred the colors of the trees. All was still. Neither footsteps nor voices were to be heard. A few drops of rain rang out on the golden copper leaves of the beeches, which had turned to autumn tints. A little stream ran tinkling over the stones. Christophe and Olivier stood still and did not stir. Each was dreaming of those whom he had lost. Olivier was thinking:

"Antoinette, where are you?"

And Christophe:

"What is success to me, now that she is dead?"

But each heard the comforting words of the dead:

"Beloved, weep not for us. Think not of us. Think of Him. . . ."

They looked at each other, and each ceased to feel his own sorrow, and was conscious only of that of his friend. They clasped their hands. In both there was sad serenity. Gently, while no wind stirred, the misty veil was raised: the blue sky shone forth again. The melting sweetness of the earth after rain. . . . So near to us, so tender! . . . The earth takes us in her arms, clasps us to her bosom with a lovely loving smile, and says to us: "Rest. All is well. . . ."

BOOK THREE

Jean-Christophe: Journey's End

LOVE AND FRIENDSHIP

I

In spite of the success which was beginning to materialize outside France, the two friends found their financial position very slow in mending. Every now and then there recurred moments of penury when they were obliged to go without food. They made up for it by eating twice as much as they needed when they had money. But, on the whole, it was a trying existence.

For the time being they were in the period of the lean kine. Christophe had stayed up half the night to finish a dull piece of musical transcription for Hecht: he did not get to bed until dawn, and slept like a log to make up for lost time. Olivier had gone out early: he had a lecture to give at the other end of Paris. About eight o'clock the porter came with the letters, and rang the bell. As a rule he did not wait for them to come, but just slipped the letters under the door. This morning he went on knocking. Only half awake, Christophe went to the door growling: he paid no attention to what the smiling, loquacious porter was saying about an article in the paper, but just took the letters without looking at them, pushed the door to without closing it, went to bed, and was soon fast asleep once more.

An hour later he woke up with a start on hearing some one in his room: and he was amazed to see a strange face at the foot of his bed, a complete stranger bowing gravely to him. It was a journalist, who, finding the door open, had entered without ceremony. Christophe was furious, and jumped out of bed:

"What the devil are you doing here?" he shouted.

He grabbed his pillow to hurl it at the intruder, who skipped back. He explained himself. A reporter of the *Nation* wished to interview M. Krafft about the article which had appeared in the *Grand Journal*.

"What article?"

"Haven't you read it?"

The reporter began to tell him what it was about.

Christophe went to bed again. If he had not been so sleepy he would have kicked the fellow out: but it was less trouble to let him talk. He curled himself up in the bed, closed his eyes, and pretended to be asleep. And very soon he would really have been off, but the reporter stuck to his guns, and in a loud voice read the beginning of the article. At the very first words Christophe pricked up his ears. M. Krafft was referred to as the greatest musical genius of the age. Christophe forgot that he was pretending to be asleep, swore in astonishment, sat up in bed, and said:

"They are mad! Who has been pulling their legs?"

The reporter seized the opportunity, and stopped reading to ply Christophe with a series of questions, which he answered unthinkingly. He had picked up the paper, and was gazing in utter amazement at his own portrait, which was printed as large as life on the front page: but he had no time to read the article, for another journalist entered the room. This time Christophe was really angry. He told them to get out: but they did not comply until they had made hurried notes of the furniture in the room, and the photographs on the wall, and the features of the strange being who, between laughter and anger, thrust them out of the room, and, in his nightgown, took them to the door and bolted it after them.

But it was ordained that he should not be left in peace that day. He had not finished dressing when there came another knock at the door, a prearranged knock which was only known to a few of their friends. Christophe opened the door, and found himself face to face with yet another stranger, whom he was just about to dismiss in a summary fashion, when the man protested that he was the author of the article. . . . How are you to get rid of a man who

regards you as a genius! Christophe had grumpily to submit to his admirer's effusions. He was amazed at the sudden notoriety which had come like a bolt from the blue, and he wondered if, without knowing it, he had had a masterpiece produced the evening before. But he had no time to find out. The journalist had come to drag him, whether he liked it or not, there and then, to the offices of the paper where the editor, the great Arsène Gamache himself, wished to see him: the car was waiting downstairs. Christophe tried to get out of it: but, in spite of himself, he was so naïvely responsive to the journalist's friendly protestations that in the end he gave way.

Ten minutes later he was introduced to a potentate in whose presence all men trembled. He was a sturdy little man, about fifty, short and stout, with a big round head, gray hair brushed up, a red face, a masterful way of speaking, a thick, affected accent, and every now and then he would break out into a choppy sort of volubility. He had forced himself on Paris by his enormous self-confidence. A business man, with a knowledge of men, naïve and deep, passionate, full of himself, he identified his business with the business of France, and even with the affairs of humanity. His own interests, the prosperity of his paper, and the *salus publica*, all seemed to him to be of equal importance and to be narrowly associated. He had no doubt that any man who wronged him, wronged France also: and to crush an adversary, he would in perfectly good faith have overthrown the Government. However, he was by no means incapable of generosity. He was an idealist of the after-dinner order, and loved to be a sort of God Almighty, and to lift some poor devil or other out of the mire, by way of demonstrating the greatness of his power, whereby he could make something out of nothing, make and unmake Ministers, and, if he had cared to, make and unmake Kings. His sphere was the universe. He would make men of genius, too, if it so pleased him.

That day he had just "made" Christophe.

It was all over in a fortnight. The newspapers gave up talking about him. However, he had become known. When

his name was mentioned, people said, not:

"The author of *David* or *Gargantua*,"

but:

"Oh yes! The *Grand Journal* man! . . ."

He was famous.

Fate is ironical. Those who do not care slip through the meshes of the net: but those who are suspicious, those who are prudent, and forewarned, are never suffered to escape. It was not Christophe who was caught in the net of Paris, but Olivier.

He had benefited by his friend's success: Christophe's fame had given him a reflected glory. He was included in many of the invitations that came for Christophe: and he went with him, meaning carefully and discreetly to look after him. No doubt he was too much absorbed in doing so to look after himself. Love passed by and caught him.

She was a little fair girl, charmingly slender, with soft hair waving in little ripples about her pure narrow forehead: she had fine eyebrows and rather heavy eyelids, eyes of a periwinkle blue, a delicately carved nose with sensitive nostrils; her temples were slightly hollowed: she had a capricious chin, and a mobile, witty, and rather sensual mouth, turning up at the corners, and the *Parmigianninesque* smile of a pure faun. She had a long, delicate throat, a pretty waist, a slender, elegant figure, and a happy, pensive expression in her girlish face, in every line of which there was the disturbing poetic mystery of the waking spring,—*Frühlingserwachen*. Her name was Jacqueline Langeais. She was not twenty. She came of a rich Catholic family, of great distinction and broad-mindedness.

Christophe was absolutely determined that Olivier should succeed in his wooing. He fussed round him like a mother, supervised his dressing, presumed to give him advice as to what he should wear, and even—(think of it!)—tied his tie for him. Olivier bore with him patiently at the cost of having to retie his tie on the stairs when Christophe was no longer present. He smiled inwardly, but he was touched by such great affection. Besides, his love had made him timid,

and he was not sure of himself, and was glad of Christophe's advice. He used to tell him everything that happened when he was with Jacqueline, and Christophe would be just as moved by it as himself, and sometimes at night he would lie awake for hours trying to find the means of making the path of love smoother for his friend.

He kept urging Olivier to go and propose his suit to Jacqueline's parents. Olivier dared not, dreading the refusal which he anticipated. Christophe also insisted on his setting about finding work, for even supposing the Langeais accepted him, he could not take Jacqueline's fortune unless he were himself in a position to earn his living. Olivier was of the same opinion, though he did not share his violent and rather comic distrust of wealthy marriages. It was a rooted idea in Christophe's mind that riches are death to the soul. M. Langeais knew quite well that Olivier was a serious young man, and perhaps had talent. . . . He gave his consent.

The day before the marriage the two friends sat up together into the small hours. They did not wish to lose the last hours of their dear life together.—But already it was in the past. It was like those sad farewells on the station platform when there is a long wait before the train moves: one insists on staying, and looking and talking. But one's heart is not in it: one's friend has already gone. . . . Christophe tried to talk. He stopped in the middle of a sentence, seeing the absent look in Olivier's eyes, and he said, with a smile:

"You are so far away!"

Olivier was confused and begged his pardon. It made him sad to realize that his thoughts were wandering during the last intimate moments with his friend. But Christophe pressed his hand, and said:

"Come, don't constrain yourself. I am happy. Go on dreaming, my boy."

They stayed by the window, leaning out side by side, and looking through the darkness down into the garden. After some time Christophe said to Olivier:

"You are running away from me. You think you can

escape me? You are thinking of your Jacqueline. But I shall catch you up. I, too, am thinking of her."

"Poor old fellow," said Olivier, "and I was thinking of you! And even . . ."

He stopped.

Christophe laughed and finished the sentence for him.

". . . And even taking a lot of trouble over it! . . ."

Christophe turned out very fine, almost smart, for the wedding. There was no religious ceremony: neither the indifferent Olivier nor the rebellious Jacqueline had wished it.

In the evening the young couple left for Italy. Christophe and M. Langeais went with them to the station. They seemed happy, not at all sorry to be going, and did not conceal their impatience for the train to move. Olivier looked like a boy, and Jacqueline like a little girl. . . . What a tender, melancholy charm is in such partings! The father is a little sad to see his child taken away by a stranger, and for what! . . . and to see her go away from him forever. But they feel nothing but a new intoxicating sense of liberty. There are no more hindrances to life: nothing can stop them ever again: they seem to have reached the very summit: now might they die readily, for they have everything, and nothing to fear. . . . But soon they see that it was no more than a stage in the journey. The road still lies before them, and winds round the mountain: and there are very few who reach the second stage. . . .

The train bore them away into the night. Christophe and M. Langeais went home together. Christophe said with naïve archness:

"Now we are both widowed!"

M. Langeais began to laugh. They said good-by, and went their ways. They were both unhappy, with an odd mixture of sadness and sweetness. Sitting alone in his room Christophe thought:

"The best of my soul is happy."

Nothing had been altered in Olivier's room. They had arranged that until Olivier returned and settled in a new

house his furniture and belongings should stay with Christophe. It was as though he himself was still present. Christophe looked at the portrait of Antoinette, placed it on his desk, and said to it:

"My dear, are you glad?"

On their return to Paris Olivier and Jacqueline resumed all their old friendships, but they did not find their friends just as they had left them. When he heard of Olivier's arrival, Christophe rushed to him delightedly. Olivier was equally rejoiced to see him. But as soon as they met they felt an unaccountable constraint between them. They both tried to break through it, but in vain. Olivier was very affectionate, but there was a change in him, and Christophe felt it. A friend who marries may do what he will: he cannot be the friend of the old days. Christophe went often to see them, and Jacqueline innocently let fly at him her barbed and poisoned shafts. He suffered her. But when he returned home he would feel sad and sorry.

Christophe had become a stranger in their household. The affectation of snobbishness and a dull practical outlook on life which Jacqueline used wickedly to exaggerate in her conversations with him were more than he could bear. He would lash out sometimes, and say hard things, which were taken in bad part. They could never have brought about a rupture between the two friends: they were too fond of each other. Nothing in the world would have induced Olivier to give up Christophe. But he could not make Jacqueline feel the same about him; and, his love making him weak, he was incapable of hurting her. Christophe, who saw what was happening to him, and how he was suffering, made the choice easy by a voluntary withdrawal. He saw that he could not help Olivier in any way by staying, but rather made things worse. He was the first to give his friend reasons for turning from him: and Olivier, in his weakness, accepted those inadequate reasons, while he guessed what the sacrifice must have cost Christophe, and was bitterly sorry for it.

Christophe bore him no ill-will. He thought that there was much truth in the saying that a man's wife is his better half. For a man married is but the half of a man.

It was not long before Christophe received a letter from Jacqueline. Her tone was very different from that to which she had accustomed him. She told him how sorry she was not to have seen him for so long, and very nicely invited him to come and see her, unless he wished to hurt two friends who loved him. Christophe was delighted, but not greatly surprised. He had been inclined to think that Jacqueline's unjust disposition towards him would not last. He was fond of quoting a jest of his old grandfather's:

"Sooner or later women have their good moments: one only needs the patience to wait for them."

He went to see Olivier, and was welcomed with delight. Jacqueline was most attentive to him: she avoided the ironical manner which was natural to her, took care not to say anything that might hurt Christophe, showed great interest in what he was doing, and talked intelligently about serious subjects. Christophe thought her transformed. But she was only so to please him. She realized that Christophe had genius, and that it would be worth while to make him love her.

The position between the young couple was not good. Jacqueline was bored, bored, bored: she was bored to death. . . . How utterly lonely a woman is! Except children, nothing can hold her: and children are not enough to hold her forever: for when she is really a woman, and not merely a female, when she has a rich soul and an abounding vitality, she is made for so many things which she cannot accomplish alone and with none to help her! . . . A man is much less lonely, even when he is most alone: he can people the desert with his own thoughts: and when he is lonely in married life he can more easily put up with it, for he notices it less, and can always live in the soliloquy of his own thoughts. And it never occurs to him that the sound of his voice going on imperturbably babbling in the desert, makes the silence more terrible and the desert more fright-

ful for the woman by his side, for whom all words are dead that are not kindled by love. He does not see it: he has not, like the woman, staked his whole life on love: his life has other occupations. . . . What man is there can fill the life of a woman and satisfy her immense desire, the millions of ardent and generous forces that, through the forty thousand years of the life of humanity, have burned to no purpose, as a holocaust offered up to two idols: passing love and motherhood, that sublime fraud, which is refused to thousands of women and never fills more than a few years in the lives of the rest?

She had in some measure succeeded in destroying Olivier. He was growing skeptical and worldly. She did not mind: she found him as weak as herself. Almost every evening they used to go out: and she would go in an agony of suffering and boredom from one fine house to another, and no one would ever guess the feeling that lay behind the irony of her unchanging smile. She was seeking for some one to love her and keep her back from the edge of the abyss. . . . In vain, in vain, in vain. There was nothing but silence in answer to her cry of despair.

Then Jacqueline and Olivier drew closer again for a time. Jacqueline had lost her father, and his death had moved her deeply. In the presence of real misfortune she had felt the wretched folly of her other sorrows: and the tenderness which Olivier showed towards her had revived her affection for him. A short absence from Paris, ordered by her doctor to distract her in her grief, travel with Olivier, a sort of pilgrimage to the places where they had loved each other during the first year of her marriage, softened her and filled her with tenderness. In the sadness of seeing once more at the turn of the road the dear face of the love which they thought was gone forever, of seeing it pass and knowing that it would vanish once more,—for how long? perhaps forever?—they clutched at it passionately and desperately. . . .

“Stay, stay with us!”

But they knew that they must lose it. . . .

When Jacqueline returned to Paris she felt a little new

life, kindled by love, thrilling in her veins. But love had gone already. The burden which lay so heavy upon her did not bring her into sympathy with Olivier again. She did not feel the joy she expected. She probed herself uneasily. Often when she had been so tormented before she had thought that the coming of a child might be her salvation. The child had come, but it brought no salvation. She felt the human plant rooted in her flesh growing, and sucking up her blood and her life. She would stay for days together lost in thought, listening with vacant eyes, all her being exhausted by the unknown creature that had taken possession of her. She was conscious of a vague buzzing, sweet, lulling, agonizing. She would start suddenly from her torpor—dripping with sweat, shivering, with a spasm of revolt. She fought against the meshes in which Nature had entrapped her. She wished to live, to live freely, and it seemed to her that Nature had tricked her. Then she was ashamed of such thoughts, and seemed monstrous in her own eyes, and asked herself if she were more wicked than, or made differently from, other women. And little by little she would grow calm again, browsing like a tree over the sap, and the dream of the living fruit ripening in her womb. What was it? What was it going to be? . . .

When she heard its first cry to the light, when she saw its pitiable touching little body, her heart melted. In one dazzling moment she knew the glorious joy of motherhood, the mightiest in all the world: in her suffering to have created of her own flesh a living being, a man. And the great wave of love which moves the universe, caught her whole body, dashed her down, rushed over her, and lifted her up to the heavens. . . . O God, the woman who creates is Thy equal: and Thou knowest no joy like unto hers: for Thou hast not suffered. . . .

Then the wave rolled back, and her soul dropped back into the depths.

Olivier, trembling with emotion, stooped over the child: and, smiling at Jacqueline, he tried to understand what bond of mysterious life there was between themselves and the wretched little creature that was as yet hardly human.

Tenderly, with a little feeling of disgust, he just touched its little yellow wrinkled face with his lips. Jacqueline watched him: jealously she pushed him away: she took the child and hugged it to her breast, and covered it with kisses. The child cried and she gave it back, and, with her face turned to the wall, she wept. Olivier came to her and kissed her, and drank her tears: she kissed him too, and forced herself to smile: then she asked to be left alone to rest with the child by her side. . . . Alas! what is to be done when love is dead? The man who gives more than half of himself up to intelligence never loses a strong feeling without preserving a trace, an idea, of it in his brain. He cannot love any more, but he cannot forget that he has loved. But the woman who has loved wholly and without reason, and without reason ceases wholly to love, what can she do? Will? Take refuge in illusions? And what if she be too weak to will, too true to take refuge in illusions? . . .

Jacqueline, lying on her side with her head propped up by her hand, looked down at the child with tender pity. What was he? Whatever he was, he was not entirely hers. He was also something of "the other." And she no longer loved "the other." Poor child! Dear child! She was exasperated with the little creature who was there to bind her to the dead past: and she bent over him and kissed and kissed him. . . .

Jacqueline spent her time in looking at herself in her mirror: she saw things in it which it were better she had never seen: for when she saw them she could not take her eyes off them: and instead of struggling against them she watched them grow: they became enormous and in the end captured her eyes and her mind.

The child was not enough to fill her life. She had not been able to nurse it: the baby pined with her. She had to procure a wet nurse. It was a great grief to her at first. . . . Soon it became a solace. The child became splendidly healthy: he grew lustily, and became a fine little fellow, gave no trouble, spent his time in sleeping, and hardly cried at all at night. The nurse—a strapping Nivernaise

who had fostered many children, and always had a jealous and embarrassing animal affection for each of them in turn—was like the real mother. Whenever Jacqueline expressed an opinion, the woman went her own way: and if Jacqueline tried to argue, in the end she always found that she knew nothing at all about it. She had never really recovered from the birth of the child: a slight attack of phlebitis had dragged her down, and as she had to lie still for several weeks she worried and worried: she was feverish, and her mind went on and on indefinitely beating out the same monotonous deluded complaint:

"I have not lived, I have not lived: and now my life is finished. . . ."

For her imagination was fired: she thought herself crippled for life: and there rose in her a dumb, harsh, and bitter rancor, which she did not confess to herself, against the innocent cause of her illness, the child. The feeling is not so rare as is generally believed: but a veil is drawn over it: and even those who feel it are ashamed to submit to it in their inmost hearts. Jacqueline condemned herself: there was a sharp conflict between her egoism and her mother's love. When she saw the child sleeping so happily, she was filled with tenderness: but a moment later she would think bitterly:

"He has killed me."

And she could not suppress a feeling of irritation and revolt against the untroubled sleep of the creature whose happiness she had bought at the price of her suffering. Even after she had recovered, when the child was bigger, the feeling of hostility persisted dimly and obscurely. As she was ashamed of it, she transferred it to Olivier. She went on fancying herself ill: and her perpetual care of her health, her anxieties, which were bolstered up by the doctors, who encouraged the idleness which was the prime cause of it all,—(separation from the child, forced inactivity, absolute isolation, weeks of emptiness spent in lying in bed and being stuffed with food, like a beast being fattened for slaughter),—had ended by concentrating all her thoughts upon herself. The modern way of curing neuras-

thenia is very strange, being neither more nor less than the substitution of hypertrophy of the ego for a disease of the ego! Why not bleed their egoism, or restore the circulation of the blood from head to heart, if they do not have too much, by some violent, moral reagent!

Jacqueline came out of it physically stronger, plumper, and rejuvenated,—but morally she was more ill than ever. Her months of isolation had broken the last ties of thought which bound her to Olivier. While she lived with him she was still under the ascendancy of his idealism, for, in spite of all his failings, he remained constant to his faith: she struggled in vain against the bondage in which she was held by a mind more steadfast than her own, against the look which pierced to her very soul, and forced her sometimes to condemn herself, however loath she might be to do so. But as soon as chance had separated her from her husband—as soon as she ceased to feel the weight of his all-seeing love—as soon as she was free—the trusting friendship that used to exist between them was supplanted by a feeling of anger at having broken free, a sort of hatred born of the idea that she had for so long lived beneath the yoke of an affection which she no longer felt.—Who can tell the hidden, implacable, bitter feelings that seethe and ferment in the heart of a creature he loves, by whom he believes that he is loved? Between one day and the next, all is changed. She loved the day before, she seemed to love, she thought she loved. She loves no longer. The man she loved is struck out from her thoughts. She sees suddenly that he is nothing to her: and he does not understand: he has seen nothing of the long travail through which she has passed: he has had no suspicion of the secret hostility towards himself that has been gathering in her: he does not wish to know the reasons for her vengeful hatred. Reasons often remote, complex, and obscure,—some hidden deep in the mysteries of their inmost life,—others arising from injured vanity, secrets of the heart surprised and judged,—others . . . What does she know of them herself? It is some hidden offense committed against her unwittingly, an offense which she will never forgive. It is impossible to find out, and she her-

self is not very sure what it is: but the offense is marked deep in her flesh: her flesh will never forget it.

To fight against such an appalling stream of disaffection called for a very different type of man from Olivier—one nearer nature, a simpler man and a more supple one not hampered with sentimental scruples, a man of strong instincts, capable, if need be, of actions which his reason would disavow. He lost the fight before ever it began, for he had lost heart.

Olivier held aloof and dropped the rudder of Jacqueline's soul. Left to herself with no pilot to steer her, her freedom turned her dizzy: she needed a master against whom to revolt: if she had no master she had to make one. Then she was the prey of a fixed idea. Till then, in spite of her suffering, she had never dreamed of leaving Olivier. From that time on she thought herself absolved from every tie. She wished to love, before it was too late:—(for, young as she was, she thought herself an old woman).—She loved, she indulged in those imaginary devouring passions, which fasten on the first object they meet, a face seen in a crowd, a reputation, sometimes merely a name, and, having laid hold of it cannot let go, telling the heart that it cannot live without the object of its choice, laying it waste, and completely emptying it of all the memories of the past that filled it; other affections, moral ideas, memories, pride of self, and respect for others. And when the fixed idea dies in its time for want of anything to feed it, after it has consumed everything, who can tell what the new nature may be that will spring from the ruins, a nature often without kindness, without pity, without youth, without illusions, thinking of nothing but devouring life as grass smothers and devours the ruins of monuments!

In this case, as usual, the fixed idea fastened on a creature of the type that most easily tricks the heart. Poor Jacqueline fell in love with a philanderer, a Parisian writer, who was neither young nor handsome, a man who was heavy, red-faced, dissipated, with bad teeth, absolutely and terribly heartless, whose chief merit was that he was a man of the world and had made a great many women unhappy.

She had not even the excuse that she did not know how selfish he was: for he paraded it in his art. He knew perfectly what he was doing: egoism enshrined in art is like a mirror to larks, like a candle to moths. More than one woman in Jacqueline's circle had been caught: quite recently one of her friends, a young, newly-married woman, whom ~~he~~ he had had no great difficulty in seducing, had been deserted by him. Their hearts were not broken by it, though they found it hard to conceal their discomfiture from the delight of the gossips. Even those who were most cruelly hurt were much too careful of their interests and their social interests not to keep their perturbation within the bounds of common sense. They made no scandal. Whether they deceived their husbands or their lovers, or whether they were themselves deceived and suffered, it was all done in silence. They were the heroines of scandalous rumors.

But Jacqueline was mad: she was capable not only of doing what she said, but also of saying what she did. She brought into her folly an absolute lack of selfish motive, and an utter disinterestedness. She had the dangerous merit of always being frank with herself and of never shirking the consequences of her own actions. She was a better creature than the people she lived with: and for that reason she did worse. When she loved, when she conceived the idea of adultery, she flung herself into it headlong with desperate frankness.

"My wife has betrayed me."

Olivier was crushed by the weight of that idea. In vain did Christophe try affectionately to shake him out of his torpor.

"What would you?" he said. "The treachery of a friend is an everyday evil like illness, or poverty, or fighting the fools. We have to be armed against it. It is a poor sort of man that cannot bear up against it."

"That's just what I am. I'm not proud of it . . . a poor sort of man: yes: a man who needs tenderness, and dies if it is taken from him."

"Your life is not finished: there are other people to love."

"I can't believe in any one. There are none who can be friends."

"Olivier!"

"I beg your pardon. I don't doubt you, although there are moments when I doubt everybody—myself included. . . . But you are strong: you don't need anybody: you can do without me."

"So can she—even better."

"You are cruel, Christophe."

"My dear fellow. I'm being brutal to you just to make you lash out. Good Lord! It is perfectly shameful of you to sacrifice those who love you, and your life, to a woman who doesn't care for you."

"What do I care for those who love me? I love her."

"Work. Your old interests . . ."

". . . Don't interest me any longer. I'm sick of it all. I seem to have passed out of life altogether. Everything seems so far away. . . . I see, but I don't understand. . . . And to think that there are men who never grow tired of winding up their clockwork every day, and doing their dull work, and their newspaper discussions, and their wretched pursuit of pleasure, men who can be violently for or against a Government, or a book, or an actress. . . . Oh! I feel so old! I feel nothing, neither hatred, nor rancor against anybody. I'm bored with everything. I feel that there is nothing in the world. . . . Write? Why write? Who understands you? I used to write only for one person: everything that I did was for her. . . . There is nothing left: I'm worn out, Christophe, fagged out. I want to sleep."

"Sleep, then, old fellow. I'll sit by you."

But sleep was the last thing that Olivier could have. Ah! if only a sufferer could sleep for months until his sorrow is no more and has no part in his new self; if only he could sleep until he became a new man! But that gift can never be his: and he would not wish to have it. The worst suffering of all were to be deprived of suffering. Olivier was like a man in a fever, feeding on his fever: a real fever which came in regular waves, being at its height in the evening

when the light began to fade. And the rest of the day it left him shattered, intoxicated by love, devoured by memory, turning the same thought over and over like an idiot chewing the same mouthful again and again without being able to swallow it, with all the forces of his brain paralyzed, grinding slowly on with the one fixed idea.

He could not, like Christophe, resort to cursing his injuries and honestly blackguarding the woman who had dealt them. He was more clear-sighted and just, and he knew that he had his share of the responsibility, and that he was not the only one to suffer: Jacqueline also was a victim:—she was his victim. She had trusted herself to him: how had he dealt with his trust? If he was not strong enough to make her happy, why had he bound her to himself? She was within her rights in breaking the ties which chafed her.

“It is not her fault,” he thought. “It is mine. I have not loved her well. And yet I loved her truly. But I did not know how to love since I did not know how to win her love.”

So he blamed himself: and perhaps he was right. But it is not much use to hold an inquest on the past: if it were all to do again, it would be just the same, inquiry or no inquiry: and such probing stands in the way of life. The strong man is he who forgets the injury that has been done him—and also, alas! that which he has done himself, as soon as he is sure that he cannot make it good. But no man is strong from reason, but from passion. Love and passion are like distant relations: they rarely go together. Olivier loved: he was only strong against himself. In the passive state into which he had fallen he was an easy prey to every kind of illness. Influenza, bronchitis, pneumonia, pounced on him. He was ill for part of the summer. Christophe nursed him devotedly: and succeeded in checking his illness. But against his moral illness he could do nothing: and little by little he was overcome by the depression and utter weariness of his perpetual melancholy, and was forced to run away from it.

II

Christophe's name was gaining ground from day to day, even with the great public. His works were played at concerts: and he had had an opera accepted by the Opéra Comique.

He had been unable to get out of going to one of the At Homes given at the Austrian Embassy. He avoided the company present and withdrew into a little room apart. Facing him on the wall was a large mirror which reflected the lights and life of the next room. He did not see it: he was gazing in upon himself. Suddenly he began to tremble for no reason. He stood so for a few seconds, very pale, unable to move. Then the veil fell from before his eyes, and he saw in the mirror in front of him, someone gazing at him. Who was she? He knew nothing save that she was his friend and that he knew her: and he stood leaning against the wall, his eyes meeting hers, and he trembled. She smiled. He could not see the lines of her face or her body, nor the expression in her eyes, nor whether she was tall or short, nor how she was dressed. Only one thing he saw: the divine goodness of her smile of compassion.

A throng of people filled the door and shut out Christophe's view of the other room. He stepped back quickly into the shade, out of sight of the mirror: he was afraid lest his emotion should be noticed. But when he was calm again he wanted to see her once more. He was afraid she would be gone. He went into the room and he found her at once in the crowd, although she did not look in the least like what he had seen in the mirror. Now he saw her in profile sitting in a group of finely dressed ladies: her elbow was resting on the arm of her chair, she was leaning forward a little, with her head in her hand, and listening to what they were saying with an intelligent absent smile: she had the expression and features of the young St. John, listening and looking through half-closed eyes, and smiling at his own thoughts, of *The Dispute* of Raphael. . . . Then she

raised her eyes, saw him, and showed no surprise. And he saw that her smile was for himself. He was much moved, and bowed, and went up to her.

"You don't recognize me?" she said.

He knew her again that very moment.

"Grazia" . . . he said.

At the same moment the ambassador's wife passed by, and smiled with pleasure to see that the long-sought meeting had at last come about: and she introduced Christophe to "Countess Berény." But Christophe was so moved that he did not even hear her, and he did not notice the new name. She was still his little Grazia to him.

Grazia was twenty-two. She had been married for a year to a young attaché of the Austrian Embassy, a nobleman, a member of a great family, related to one of the Emperor's chief ministers, a snob, a man of the world, smart, prematurely worn out; and with whom she had been genuinely in love, while she still loved him, though she judged him. Her old father was dead. Her husband had been appointed to the Embassy in Paris. Through Count Berény's influence, and her own charm and intelligence, the timid little girl, whom the smallest thing used to set in a flutter, had become one of the best-known women in Parisian society, though she did nothing to procure that distinction, which embarrassed her not at all. It is a great thing to be young and pretty, and to give pleasure, and to know it. And it is a thing no less great to have a tranquil heart, sound and serene, which can find happiness in the harmonious coincidence of its desires and its fate. The lonely flower of her life had unfolded its petals: but she had lost some of the calm music of her Latin soul, fed by the light and the mighty peace of Italy.

She had not forgotten her great friend Christophe. No doubt there was nothing left of the child in whom an innocent love had burned in silence. This new Grazia was a very sensible woman, not at all given to romance. She regarded the exaggerations of her childish tenderness with a gentle irony. And yet she was always moved by the mem-

ory of it. The thought of Christophe was associated with the purest hours of her life. She could not hear his name spoken without feeling pleasure: and each of his successes delighted her as though she had shared in it herself: for she had felt that they must come to him. As soon as she arrived in Paris she tried to meet him again. She had invited him to her house, and had appended her maiden name to her letter. Christophe had paid no attention to it, and had flung the invitation into the waste-paper basket unanswered. She was not offended. She had gone on following his doings and, to a certain extent, his life, without his knowing it.

They talked of the past. Christophe hardly knew what they said. A man hears the woman he loves just as little as he sees her. He loves her. And when a man really loves he never even thinks whether he is loved or no. Christophe never doubted it. She was there: that was enough. All the rest had ceased to exist. . . .

Grazia stopped speaking. A very tall young man, quite handsome, well-dressed, clean-shaven, partly bald, with a bored, contemptuous manner, stood appraising Christophe through his eye-glass, and then bowed with haughty politeness.

"My husband," said she.

The clatter and chatter of the room rushed back to his ears. The inward light died down. Christophe was frozen, said nothing, bowed, and withdrew at once.

How ridiculous and consuming are the unreasonable demands of the souls of artists and the childish laws which govern their passionate lives! Hardly had he once more found the friend whom he had neglected in the old days when she loved him, while he had not thought of her for years, than it seemed to him that she was his, his very own, and that if another man had taken her he had stolen her from him: and she herself had no right to give herself to another. Christophe did not know clearly what was happening to him. But his creative daimon knew it perfectly, and in those days begat some of his loveliest songs of sorrowful love.

Some time passed before he saw her again. He was obsessed by thoughts of Olivier's troubles and his health. At last one day he came upon the address she had given him and he made up his mind to call on her.

As he went up the steps he heard the sound of workmen hammering. The anteroom was in disorder and littered with boxes and trunks. The footman replied that the Countess was not at home. But as Christophe was disappointedly going away after leaving his card, the servant ran after him and asked him to come in and begged his pardon. Christophe was shown into a little room in which the carpets had been rolled up and taken away. Grazia came towards him with her bright smile and her hand held out impulsively and gladly. All his foolish rancor vanished. He took her hand with the same happy impulsiveness and kissed it.

"Ah!" she said, "I am glad you came! I was so afraid I should have to go away without seeing you again!"

"Go away? You are going away!"

Once more darkness descended upon him.

"You see . . ." she said, pointing to the litter in the room. "We are leaving Paris at the end of the week."

"For long?"

She shrugged:

"Who knows?"

He tried to speak. But his throat was dry.

"Where are you going?"

"To the United States. My husband has been appointed first secretary to the Embassy."

"And so, and so . . ." he said . . . (his lips trembled) . . . "it is all over?"

"My dear friend!" she said, touched by his tone. . . .

"No: it is not all over."

"I have found you again only to lose you?"

There were tears in her eyes.

"My dear friend," she said again.

He held his hand over his eyes and turned away to hide his emotion.

"Do not be so sad," she said, laying her hand on his.

Once more, just then, he thought of the little girl in Germany. They were silent.

"Why did you come so late?" she asked at last. "I tried to find you. You never replied."

"I did not know. I did not know," he said. . . .

"You do not know," she said, "what you have been to me."

She spoke of the days when she was a little girl and met him at the house of her uncle, Stevens, and he had given her through his music the revelation of all that is beautiful in the world. And little by little, with growing animation she told him with brief allusions, that were both veiled and transparent, of her childish feeling for him. And as Christophe listened to her, in all good faith, he projected his actual emotion and the tenderness he felt for the tender face so near his own into the past.

They talked innocently, fondly, and joyously. And, as he talked, Christophe took Grazia's hand. And suddenly they both stopped: for Grazia saw that Christophe loved her. And Christophe saw it too. . . .

For some time Grazia had loved Christophe without Christophe knowing or caring. Now Christophe loved Grazia: and Grazia had nothing for him but calm friendship: she loved another man. As so often happens, one of the two clocks of their lives was a little faster than the other, and it was enough to have changed the course of both their lives. . . .

Grazia withdrew her hand, and Christophe did not stay her. And they sat there for a moment, mum, without a word.

And Grazia said:

"Good-bye."

Christophe said plaintively once more:

"And it is all over?"

"No doubt it is better that it should be so."

"We shall not meet again before you go."

"No," she said.

"When shall we meet again?"

She made a sad little gesture of doubt.

"Then," said Christophe, "what's the good, what's the good of our having met again?"

Her eyes reproached him, and he said quickly:

"No. Forgive me. I am unjust."

"I shall always think of you," said she.

"Alas!" he replied, "I cannot even think of you. I know nothing of your life."

Very quietly she described her ordinary life in a few words and told him how her days were spent. She spoke of herself and of her husband with her lovely affectionate smile.

"Ah!" he said jealously. "You love him?"

"Yes," she said.

He got up.

"Good-bye."

She got up too. Then only he saw that she was with child. And in his heart there was an inexpressible feeling of disgust, and tenderness, and jealousy, and passionate pity. She walked with him to the door of the little room. There he turned, bent over her hands, and kissed them fervently. She stood there with her eyes half closed and did not stir. At last he drew himself up, turned, and hurried away without looking at her.

THE BURNING BUSH

I

Olivier had taken a very modest lodging at the top of the Montrouge quarter, not far from Christophe. The district was rather common, and the house in which he lived was occupied by little gentlepeople, clerks, and a few working-class families. At any other time he would have suffered

from such surroundings in which he moved as a stranger: but now it mattered very little to him where he was: he felt that he was a stranger everywhere. He hardly knew and did not want to know who his neighbors were. When he returned from his work—he had gone into a publishing-house—he withdrew into his memories, and would only go out to see his child and Christophe. His lodging was not home to him: it was the dark room in which the images of the past took shape and dwelling: the darker it was the more clearly did the inward images emerge. He scarcely noticed the faces of those he passed on the stairs. And yet unconsciously he was aware of certain faces that were impressed upon his mind. There is a certain order of mind which only really sees things after they have passed. But then, nothing escapes them, the smallest details are graven on the plate.

If a man is to shed the light of the sun upon other men, he must first of all have it within himself. Olivier had none of it. Like the best man of to-day, he was not strong enough to radiate force by himself. But in unison with others he might have been able to do so. But with whom could he unite? He was free in mind and at heart religious, and he was rejected by every party political and religious. They were all intolerant and narrow and were continually at rivalry. Whenever they came into power they abused it. Only the weak and the oppressed attracted Olivier. In this at least he agreed with Christophe's opinion, that before setting out to combat injustice in distant lands, it were as well to fight injustice close at hand, injustice everywhere about, injustice for which each and every man is more or less responsible. There are only too many people who are quite satisfied with protesting against the evil wrought by others, without ever thinking of the evil that they do themselves.

At first he turned his attention to the relief of the poor. He began to study the problem of social poverty. There was no lack of guides to point the way. In those days the social question had become a society question. It was discussed in drawing-rooms, in the theater, in novels.

Everybody claimed some knowledge of it. Some of the young men were expending the best part of their powers upon it.

Every new generation needs to have some splendid mania or other. Even the most selfish of young people are endowed with a superfluity of life, a capital sum of energy which has been advanced to them and cannot be left idle and unproductive: they are for ever seeking to expend it on a course of action, or—(more prudently)—on a theory. Aviation or Revolution, a muscular or intellectual exercise. When a man is young he needs to be under the illusion that he is sharing in some great movement of humanity and is renewing the life of the world. It is a lovely thing when the senses thrill in answer to every puff of the winds of the universe! Then a man is so free, so light! Not yet is he laden with the ballast of a family, he has nothing, risks next to nothing. A man is very generous when he can renounce what is not yet his. Besides, it is so good to love and to hate, and to believe that one is transforming the earth with dreams and shouting! Young people are like watch-dogs: they are for ever howling and barking at the wind. An act of injustice committed at the other end of the world will send them off their heads.

Olivier and Christophe watched the wind coming. Both of them had strong eyes. But they used them in different ways. Olivier, whose clear gaze, in spite of himself, pierced to the very inmost thoughts of men, was saddened by their mediocrity: but he saw the hidden force that sustained them: he was most struck by the tragic aspect of things. Christophe was more sensible of their comic aspect. Men interested him, ideas not at all. He affected a contemptuous indifference towards them. He laughed at Socialistic Utopias. In a spirit of contradiction and out of instinctive reaction against the morbid humanitarianism which was the order of the day, he appeared to be more selfish than he was: he was a self-made man, a sturdy upstart, proud of his strength of body and will, and he was a little too apt to regard all those who had not his force as shirkers. In poverty and alone he had been able to win through: let

others do the same! Why all this talk of a social question? What question? Poverty?

"I know all about that," he would say. "My father, my mother, I myself, we have been through it. It's only a matter of getting out of it."

"Not everybody can," Olivier would reply. "What about the sick and the unlucky?"

"One must help them, that's all. But that is a very different thing from setting them on a pinnacle, as people are doing nowadays. Only a short while ago people were asserting the odious doctrine of the rights of the strongest man. Upon my word, I'm inclined to think that the rights of the weakest are even more detestable: they're sapping the thought of to-day, the weakest man is tyrannizing over the strong, and exploiting them. It really looks as though it has become a merit to be diseased, poor, unintelligent, broken,—and a vice to be strong, upstanding, happy in fighting, and an aristocrat in brains and blood. And what is most absurd of all is this, that the strong are the first to believe it. . . . It's a fine subject for a comedy, my dear Olivier!"

Christophe was seeking the real public, the public which believes in the emotions of art as in those of life, and feels them with a virgin soul. And he was vaguely attracted by the new promised world—the people. The memories of his childhood, Gottfried and the poor, who had revealed to him the living depths of art, or had shared with him the sacred bread of music, made him inclined to believe that his real friends were to be found among such people. Like many another young man of a generous heart and simple faith, he cherished great plans for a popular art, concerts, and a theater for the people, which he would have been hard put to it to define. He thought that a revolution might make it possible to bring about a great artistic renaissance, and he pretended that he had no other interest in the social movement. But he was hoodwinking himself: he was much too alive not to be attracted and drawn onward by the sight of the most living activity of the time.

He watched them all with affectionate and mocking interest: he believed that he was outside the piece they were playing: and he did not see that little by little he was being drawn into it. He thought only of being a spectator watching the wind rush by. But already the wind had caught him, and was dragging him along into its whirling cloud of dust.

Free and self-confident, Christophe watched with tingling interest the coalition of the proletarians: he needed every now and then to plunge into the vat of the people: it relaxed him: he always issued from it fresher and jollier. He improvised a revolutionary song, which was at once tried, repeated, and on the very next day spread to every group of the working-classes. He compromised himself. He was marked by the police. Manousse Heimann, one of the men whom Christophe and Olivier had met during their political activities, who was in touch with the innermost chambers of authority, was warned by one of his friends, Xavier Bernard, a young official in the police department, who dabbled in literature and expressed a violent admiration for Christophe's music:—(for dilettantism and the spirit of anarchy had spread even to the watchdogs of the Third Republic).

"That Krafft of yours is making himself a nuisance," said Bernard to Manousse. "He's playing the braggart. We know what it means: but I tell you that those in high places would be not at all sorry to catch a foreigner—what's more, a German—in a revolutionary plot: it is the regular method of discrediting the party and casting suspicion upon its doings. If the idiot doesn't look out we shall be obliged to arrest him. It's a bore. You'd better warn him."

Manousse did warn Christophe: Olivier begged him to be careful. Christophe did not take their advice seriously.

"Bah!" he said. "Everybody knows there's no harm in me. I've a perfect right to amuse myself. I like these people. They work as I do, and they have faith, and so have I. As a matter of fact, it isn't the same faith; we don't belong to the same camp. . . . Very well! We'll fight. Not that I don't like fighting. What would you? I can't do as you do,

and stay curled up in my shell. I must breathe. I'm stifled by the comfortable classes."

The First of May was approaching. A sinister rumor ran through Paris. The blustering leaders of the syndicalists were doing their best to spread it. Their papers were announcing the coming of the great day, mobilizing the forces of the working-classes, and directing the word of terror upon the point in which the comfortable classes were mostly sensitive—namely, upon the stomach. . . . *Feri ventrèm.* . . . They were threatening them with a general strike. The scared Parisians were leaving for the country or laying in provisions as against a siege.

Christophe was tickled to death by such universal cowardice. He was convinced that nothing would come of it all. Olivier was not so sure. His birth into the burgess-class had given him something of the inevitable and everlasting tremulation which the comfortable classes always feel upon the recollection or the expectation of Revolution.

"That's all right!" said Christophe. "You can sleep in peace. Your Revolution isn't going to happen to-morrow. You're all afraid. Afraid of being hurt. That sort of fear is everywhere. In the upper-classes, in the people, in every nation, in all the nations of the West. There's not enough blood in the whole lot of them; they're afraid of spilling a little. For the last forty years all the fighting has been done in words, in newspaper articles. Just look at your old Dreyfus Affair. You shouted loud enough: 'Death! Blood! Slaughter!' . . . Oh! you Gascons! Spittle and ink! But how many drops of blood?"

"Don't you be so sure," said Olivier. "The fear of blood is a secret instinctive feeling that on the first shedding of it the beast in man will see red, and the brute will appear again under the crust of civilization; and God knows how it will ever be muzzled! Everybody hesitates to declare war: but when the war does come it will be a frightful thing."

Christophe shrugged his shoulders and said that it was not for nothing that the heroes of the age were lying heroes,

Cyrano the braggart and the swaggering cock, Chantecler.

Olivier nodded. He knew that in France bragging is the beginning of action. However, he had no more faith than Christophe in an immediate movement: it had been too loudly proclaimed, and the Government was on its guard. There was reason to believe that the syndicalist strategists would postpone the fight for a more favorable opportunity.

During the latter half of April Olivier had an attack of influenza: he used to get it every winter about the same time, and it always used to develop into his old enemy, bronchitis. Christophe stayed with him for a few days. The attack was only a slight one, and soon passed. But, as usual, it left Olivier morally and physically worn out, and he was in this condition for some time after the fever had subsided. He stayed in bed, lying still for hours without any desire to get up or even to move: he lay there watching Christophe, who was sitting at his desk, working, with his back towards him.

Christophe was absorbed in his work. Sometimes, when he was tired of writing, he would suddenly get up and walk over to the piano: he would play, not what he had written, but just whatever came into his mind. Then there came to pass a very strange thing. While the music he had written was conceived in a style which recalled that of his earlier work, what he played was like that of another man. It was music of a world raucous and uncontrolled. There were in it a disorder and a violence, and incoherence which had no resemblance at all to the powerful order and logic which were everywhere present in his other music. These unconsidered improvisations, escaping the scrutiny of his artistic conscience, sprang, like the cry of an animal, from the flesh rather than from the mind, and seemed to reveal a disturbance of the balance of his soul, a storm brewing in the depths of the future. Christophe was quite unconscious of it: but Olivier would listen, look at Christophe, and feel vaguely uneasy. In his weak condition he had a singular power of penetration, a far-seeing eye: he saw things that no other man could perceive.

Christophe thumped out a final chord and stopped all in a sweat, and looking rather haggard: he looked at Olivier, and there was still a troubled expression in his eyes; then he began to laugh, and went back to his desk. Olivier asked him:

"What was that, Christophe?"

"Nothing," replied Christophe. "I'm stirring the water to attract my fish."

"Are you going to write that?"

"That? What do you mean?"

"What you've just said."

"What did I say? I don't remember."

"What were you thinking of?"

"I don't know," said Christophe, drawing his hand across his forehead.

He went on writing. Silence once more filled the room. Olivier went on looking at Christophe. Christophe felt that he was looking, and turned. Olivier's eyes were upon him with such a hunger of affection!

"Lazy brute!" he said gaily.

Olivier sighed.

"What's the matter?" asked Christophe.

"Oh! Christophe! To think there are so many things in you, sitting there, close at hand, treasures that you will give to others, and I shall never be able to share! . . ."

"Are you mad? What's come to you?"

"I wonder what your life will be. I wonder what peril and sorrow you have still to go through. . . . I would like to follow you. I would like to be with you. . . . But I shan't see anything of it all. I shall be left stuck stupidly by the wayside."

"Stupid? You are that. Do you think that I would leave you behind even if you wanted to be left?"

"You will forget me," said Olivier.

Christophe got up and went and sat on the bed by Olivier's side: he took his wrists, which were wet with a clammy sweat of weakness. His nightshirt was open at the neck, showing his weak chest, his too transparent skin,

which was stretched and thin like a sail blown out by a puff of wind to rending point. Christophe's strong fingers fumbled as he buttoned the neckband of Olivier's night-shirt. Olivier suffered him.

"Dear Christophe!" he said tenderly. "Yet I have had one great happiness in my life!"

"Oh! what on earth are you thinking of?" said Christophe. "You're as well as I am."

"Yes," said Olivier.

"Then why talk nonsense?"

"I was wrong," said Olivier, ashamed and smiling. "Influenza is so depressing."

"Pull yourself together, though! Get up."

"Not now. Later on."

Next day Christophe called for Olivier to take him for a walk in Paris. Olivier was better: but he still had the same strange feeling of exhaustion: he did not want to go out, he had a vague fear, he did not like mixing with the crowd. His heart and mind were brave: but the flesh was weak. He was afraid of a crush, an affray, brutality of all sorts: he knew only too well that he was fated to be a victim, that he could not, even would not, defend himself: for he had as great a horror of giving pain as of suffering it himself. Men who are sick in body shudder away from physical suffering more readily than others, because they are more familiar with it, because they have less power to resist, and because it is presented more immediately and more poignantly to their heated imagination. Olivier was ashamed of this physical cowardice of his which was in entire contradiction to the stoicism of his will: and he tried hard to fight it down. But this morning the thought of human contact of any sort was painful to him, and he would gladly have remained indoors all day long. Christophe scolded him, rallied him, absolutely insisted on his going out and throwing off his stupor: for quite ten days he had not had a breath of air. Olivier pretended not to pay any attention. Christophe said:

"Very well. I'll go without you. I want to see their First of May. If I don't come back to-night, you will know that I have been locked up."

He went out. Olivier caught him up on the stairs. He would not leave Christophe to go alone.

There were very few people in the streets. A few little work-girls wearing sprays of lily-of-the-valley. Working-people in their Sunday clothes were walking about rather listlessly. At the street corners, and near the Métro stations were groups of policemen in plain clothes. The gates of the Luxembourg were closed. The weather was still foggy and damp. It was a long, long time since the sun had shown himself! . . . The friends walked arm in arm. They spoke but little, but they were very glad of each other. A few words were enough to call up all their tender memories of the intimate past. They stopped in front of a *mairie* to look at the barometer, which had an upward tendency.

"To-morrow," said Olivier, "I shall see the sun."

On the other side of the river they began to fall in with more people. Just ordinary peaceful people taking a walk, wearing their Sunday clothes and faces; poor people with their babies: workmen loafing. A few here and there wore the red eglantine in their buttonholes: they looked quite inoffensive: they were revolutionaries by dint of self-persuasion: they were obviously quite benevolent and optimistic at heart, well satisfied with the smallest opportunities for happiness: whether it were fine or merely passable for their holiday, they were grateful for it . . . they did not know exactly to whom . . . to everything and everybody about them. They walked along without any hurry, expansively admiring the new leaves of the trees and the pretty dresses of the little girls who went by: they said proudly:

"Only in Paris can you see children so well dressed as that."

Christophe made fun of the famous upheaval that had been predicted. . . . Such nice people! . . . He was quite fond of them, although a little contemptuous.

As they got farther along the crowd thickened. Men with pale hangdog faces and horrible mouths slipped into the

stream of people, all on the alert, waiting for the time to pounce on their prey. The mud was stirred up. With every inch the river grew more and more turbid. Now it flowed slowly thick, opaque, and heavy. Like air-bubbles rising from the depths to the greasy surface, there came up calling voices, shrill whistles, the cries of the newsboys, piercing the dull roar of the multitude, and made it possible to take the measure of its strata. At the end of a street there was a noise like that of a mill-race. The crowd was stemmed up against several ranks of police and soldiers. In front of the obstacles a serried mass was formed, howling, whistling, singing, laughing, and eddying this way and that. . . . The laughter of the people is the only means they have of expressing a thousand obscure and yet deep feelings which cannot find an outlet in words! . . .

The multitude was not hostile. The people did not know what they wanted. Until they did know they were content to amuse themselves—after their own nervous, brutal fashion, still without malice—to amuse themselves with pushing and being pushed, insulting the police and each other. But little by little, they lost their ardor. Those who came up from behind got tired of being able to see nothing, and were the more provocative inasmuch as they ran little risk behind the shelter of the human barricade in front of them. Those in front, being crushed between those who were pushing and those who were offering resistance, grew more and more exasperated as their position became more and more intolerable: the force of the current pushing them on increased their own force an hundredfold. And all of them, as they were squeezed closer and closer together, like cattle, felt the warmth of the whole herd creeping through their breasts and their loins: and it seemed to them then that they formed a solid block: and each was all, each was a giant with the arms of Briareus. Every now and then a wave of blood would surge to the heart of the thousand-headed monster: eyes would dart hatred, murderous cries would go up. Men cowering away in the third and fourth row began to throw stones. Whole families were looking down from the windows of the houses: it was like being at

the play: they excited the mob and waited with a little thrill of agonized impatience for the troops to charge.

Christophe forced his way through the dense throng with elbows and knees, like a wedge. Olivier followed him. The living mass parted for a moment to let them pass and closed again at once behind them. Christophe was in fine fettle. He had entirely forgotten that only five minutes ago he had denied the possibility of an upheaval of the people. Hardly had he set foot inside the stream than he was swept along: though he was a foreigner in this crowd of Frenchmen and a stranger to their demands, yet he was suddenly engulfed by them: little he cared what they wanted: he wanted it too: little he cared whither they were going: he was going too, drinking in the breath of their madness.

Olivier was dragged along after him, but it was no joy to him; he saw clearly, he never lost his self-consciousness, and was a thousand times more a stranger to the passions of these people who were his people than Christophe, and yet he was carried away by them like a piece of wreckage. His illness, which had weakened him, had also relaxed everything that bound him to life. How far removed he felt from these people! . . . Being free from the delirium that was in them and having all his wits at liberty, his mind took in the minutest details. It gave him pleasure to gaze at the bust of a girl standing in front of him and at her pretty, white neck. And at the same time he was disgusted by the sickly, thick smell that was given off from the close-packed heap of bodies.

"Christophe!" he begged.

Christophe did not hear him.

"Christophe!"

"Eh?"

"Let's go home."

"You're afraid?" said Christophe.

He pushed on. Olivier followed him with a sad smile.

At that very moment the cuirassiers, getting tired of having stones flung at them, marched forward to clear the entrances to the square: the central body came forward at a double. Immediately the stampede began. As the Gospel

has it, the first were last. But they took good care not to be last for long. By way of covering their confusion the runaways yelled at the soldiers following them and screamed: "Assassins!" long before a single blow had been struck.

Christophe was swept along by the workmen and plunged into the fray without knowing who had been the cause of it. Nothing was farther from his thoughts than that Olivier had taken part in it. He thought him far away in safety. It was impossible to see anything of the fight. Every man had enough to do in keeping an eye on his opponent. Olivier had disappeared in the whirlpool like a foundered ship. He had received a jab from a bayonet, meant for some one else, in his left breast: he fell: the crowd trampled him underfoot. Christophe had been swept away by an eddy to the farthest extremity of the field of battle. He did not fight with any animosity: he jostled and was jostled with a fierce zest as though he was in the throng at a village fair. So little did he think of the serious nature of the affair that when he was gripped by a huge, broad-shouldered policeman and closed with him, he saw the thing in grotesque and said:

"My waltz, I think."

But when another policeman pounced on to his back, he shook himself like a wild boar, and hammered away with his fists at the two of them: he had no intention of being taken prisoner. One of his adversaries, the man who had seized him from behind, rolled down on the ground. The other lost his head and drew his sword. Christophe saw the point of the saber come within a hand's breadth of his chest: he dodged, and twisted the man's wrist and tried to wrench his weapon from him. He could not understand it: till then it had seemed to him just a game. They went on struggling and battering at each other's faces. He had no time to stop to think. He saw murder in the other man's eyes: and murderous desire awoke in him. He saw that the man would slit him up like a sheep. With a sudden movement he turned the man's hand and sword against himself: he plunged the sword into his breast, felt that he

was killing him, and killed him. And suddenly the whole thing was changed: he was mad, intoxicated, and he roared aloud.

His yells produced an indescribable effect. The crowd had smelt blood. In a moment it became a savage pack. On all sides swords were drawn. The red flag appeared in the windows of the houses. And old memories of Parisian revolutions prompted them to build a barricade. The stones were torn up from the street, the gas lamps were wrenched away, trees were pulled up, an omnibus was overturned. A trench that had been left open for months in connection with work on the *Métropolitain* was turned to account. The cast-iron railings round the trees were broken up and used as missiles. Weapons were brought out of pockets and from the houses. In less than an hour the scuffle had grown into an insurrection: the whole district was in a state of siege. And, on the barricade, was Christophe, unrecognizable, shouting his revolutionary song, which was taken up by a score of voices.

Olivier had been carried to a shop. He was unconscious. He had been laid on a bed in the dark back-shop. Manousse Heimann was there, fortunately, with another friend called Canet. Like Christophe they had come out of curiosity to see the demonstration: they had been present at the affray and seen Olivier fall. Canet was blubbering like a child: and at the same time he was thinking:

"What on earth am I doing here?"

Manousse examined Olivier: at once he saw that it was all over. He had a great feeling for Olivier: but he was not a man to worry about what can't be helped: and he turned his thoughts to Christophe. He admired Christophe though he regarded him as a pathological case. He knew his ideas about the Revolution: and he wanted to deliver him from the idiotic danger he was running in a cause that was not his own. The risk of a broken head in the scuffle was not the only one: if Christophe were taken, everything pointed to his being used as an example and getting more than he bargained for. Manousse had long ago been warned that the police had their eye on Chris-

tophe: they would saddle him not only with his own follies but with those of others. Xavier Bernard, whom Manousse had just encountered, prowling through the crowd, for his own amusement as well as in pursuit of duty, had nodded to him as he passed and said:

"That Krafft of yours is an idiot. Would you believe that he's putting himself up as a mark on the barricade! We shan't miss him this time. You'd better get him out of harm's way."

That was easier said than done. If Christophe were to find out that Olivier was dying he would become a raging madman he would go out to kill, he would be killed. Manousse said to Bernard:

"If he doesn't go at once, he's done for. I'll try and take him away."

"How?"

"In Canet's motor. It's over there at the corner of the street."

"Please, please . . ." gulped Canet.

"You must take him to Laroche," Manousse went on. "You will get there in time to catch the Pontarlier express. You must pack him off to Switzerland."

"He won't go."

"He will. I'll tell him that Jeannin will follow him, or has already gone."

Without paying any attention to Canet's objections Manousse set out to find Christophe on the barricade. He was not very courageous, he started every time he heard a shot: and he counted the cobble-stones over which he stepped—(odd or even), to make out his chances of being killed. He did not stop, but went through with it. When he reached the barricade he found Christophe, perched on a wheel of the overturned omnibus, amusing himself by firing pistol-shots into the air. Round the barricade the riff-raff of Paris, spewed up from the gutters, had swollen up like the dirty water from a sewer after heavy rain. The original combatants were drowned by it. Manousse shouted to Christophe, whose back was turned to him. Christophe did not hear him. Manousse climbed up to him and plucked

at his sleeve. Christophe pushed him away and almost knocked him down. Manousse stuck to it, climbed up again, and shouted:

"Jeannin . . ."

In the uproar the rest of the sentence was lost. Christophe stopped short, dropped his revolver, and, slipping down from his scaffolding, he rejoined Manousse, who started pulling him away.

"You must clear out," said Manousse.

"Where is Olivier?"

"You must clear out," repeated Manousse.

"Why?" said Christophe.

"The barricade will be captured in an hour. You will be arrested to-night."

"What have I done?"

"Look at your hands. . . . Come! . . . There's no room for doubt, they won't spare you. Everybody recognized you. You've not got a moment to lose."

"Where is Olivier?"

"At home."

"I'll go and join him."

"You can't do that. The police are waiting for you at the door. He sent me to warn you. You must cut and run."

"Where do you want me to go?"

"To Switzerland. Canet will take you out of this in his car."

"And Olivier?"

"There's no time to talk. . . ."

"I won't go without seeing him."

"You'll see him there. He'll join you to-morrow. He'll go by the first train. Quick! I'll explain."

He caught hold of Christophe. Christophe was dazed by the noise and the wave of madness that had rushed through him, could not understand what he had done and what he was being asked to do, and let himself be dragged away. Manousse took his arm, and with his other hand caught hold of Canet, who was not at all pleased with the part allotted to him in the affair: and he packed the two of them into the car. The worthy Canet would have been

bitterly sorry if Christophe had been caught, but he would have much preferred some one else to help him to escape. Manousse knew his man. And as he had some qualms about Canet's cowardice, he changed his mind just as he was leaving them and the car was getting into its stride and climbed up and sat with them.

Olivier did not recover consciousness. By the dying man's head, on the pillow, someone laid a First of May nosegay, a few sprays of lily-of-the-valley. A leaky tap in the courtyard dripped, dripped into a bucket. For a second mental images hovered tremblingly at the back of his mind, like a light flickering and dying down . . . a house in the country with glycine on the walls: a garden where a child was playing: a boy lying on the turf: a little fountain plashing in its stone basin: a little girl laughing. . . .

II

They drove out of Paris. They crossed the vast plains of France shrouded in mist. It was an evening like that on which Christophe had arrived in Paris ten years before. He was a fugitive then, as now. But then his friend, the man who loved him, was alive: and Christophe was fleeing towards him. . . .

During the first hour Christophe was still under the excitement of the fight: he talked volubly in a loud voice: in a breathless, jerky fashion he kept on telling what he had seen and heard: he was proud of his achievement and felt no remorse. Manousse and Canet talked too, by way of making him forget. Gradually his feverish excitement subsided, and Christophe stopped talking: his two companions went on making conversation alone. He was a little bewildered by the afternoon's adventures, but in no way abashed. He recollected the time when he had come to France, a fugitive then, always a fugitive. It made him laugh. No doubt he was fated to be so. It gave him no pain to be leaving Paris: the world is wide: men are the same everywhere. It mattered little to him where he might be so

long as he was with his friend. He was counting on seeing him again next day. They had promised him that.

They reached Laroche. Manousse and Canet did not leave him until they had seen him into the train. Christophe made them say over the name of the place where he was to get out, and the name of the hotel, and the post-office where he would find his letters. In spite of themselves, as they left him, they both looked utterly dejected. Christophe wrung their hands gaily.

"Come!" he shouted, "don't look so like a funeral! Good Lord, we shall meet again! Nothing easier! We'll write to each other to-morrow."

The train started. They watched it disappear.

"Poor devil!" said Manousse.

They got back into the car. They were silent. After a short time Canet said to Manousse:

"Bah! the dead are dead. We must help the living."

As night fell Christophe's excitement subsided altogether. He sat huddled in a corner of the carriage, and pondered. He was sobered and icy cold. He looked down at his hands and saw blood on them that was not his own. He gave a shiver of disgust. The scene of the murder came before him once more. He remembered that he had killed a man: and now he knew not why. He began to go over the whole battle from the very beginning; but now he saw it in a very different light. He could not understand how he had got mixed up in it. He went back over every incident of the day from the moment when he had left the house with Olivier: he saw the two of them walking through Paris until the moment when he had been caught up by the whirlwind. There he lost the thread: the chain of his thoughts was snapped: how could he have shouted and struck out and moved with those men with whose beliefs he disagreed? It was not he, it was not he! . . . It was a total eclipse of his will! . . . He was dazed by it and ashamed. He was not his own master then? Who was his master? . . . He was being carried by the express through the night: and the inward night through which he was being carried was no less dark, nor was the unknown force less swift and

dizzy. . . . He tried hard to shake off his unease: but one anxiety was followed by another. The nearer he came to his destination, the more he thought of Olivier; and he was oppressed by an unreasoning fear.

As he arrived he looked through the window across the platform for the familiar face of his friend. . . . There was no one. He got out and still went on looking about him. Once or twice he thought he saw . . . No, it was not "he." He went to the appointed hotel. Olivier was not there. There was no reason for Christophe to be surprised: how could Olivier have preceded him? . . . But from that moment on he was in an agony of suspense.

It was morning. Christophe went up to his room. Then he came down again, had breakfast, sauntered through the streets. He pretended to be free of anxiety and looked at the lake and the shop-windows, chaffed the girl in the restaurant, and turned over the illustrated papers. . . . Nothing interested him. The day dragged through, slowly and heavily. About seven o'clock in the evening, Christophe having, for want of anything else to do, dined early and eaten nothing, went up to his room, and asked that as soon as the friend he was expecting arrived, he should be brought up to him. He sat down at the desk with his back turned to the door. He had nothing to busy himself with, no baggage, no books: only a paper that he had just bought: he forced himself to read it: but his mind was wandering: he was listening for footsteps in the corridor. All his nerves were on edge with the exhaustion of a day's anxious waiting and a sleepless night.

Suddenly he heard some one open the door. Some indefinable feeling made him not turn around at once. He felt a hand on his shoulder. Then he turned and saw Olivier smiling at him. He was not surprised, and said:

"Ah, here you are at last!"

The illusion vanished.

Christophe got up suddenly, knocking over chair and table. His hair stood on end. He stood still for a moment, livid, with his teeth chattering.

At the end of that moment—(in vain did he shut his

eyes to it and tell himself: "I know nothing")—he knew everything: he was sure of what he was going to hear.

He could not stay in his room. He went down into the street and walked about for an hour. When he returned the porter met him in the hall of the hotel and gave him a letter. *The letter.* He was quite sure it would be there. His hand trembled as he took it. He opened it, saw that Olivier was dead, and fainted.

The letter was from Manousse. It said that in concealing the disaster from him the day before, and hurrying him off, they had only been obeying Olivier's wishes, who had desired to insure his friend's escape,—that it was useless for Christophe to stay, as it would mean the end of him also,—that it was his duty to seek safety for the sake of his friend's memory, and for his other friends, and for the sake of his own fame, etc., etc. . . .

When Christophe came back to himself he was furiously angry. He wanted to kill Manousse. He ran to the station. The hall of the hotel was empty, the streets were deserted: in the darkness the few belated passers-by did not notice his wildly staring eyes or his furious breathing. His mind had fastened as firmly as a bulldog with its fangs on to the one fixed idea: "Kill Manousse! Kill! . . ." He wanted to return to Paris. The night express had gone an hour before. He had to wait until the next morning. He could not wait. He took the first train that went in the direction of Paris, a train which stopped at every station. When he was left alone in the carriage Christophe cried over and over again:

"It is not true! It is not true!"

At the second station across the French frontier the train stopped altogether: it did not go any farther. Shaking with fury, Christophe got out and asked for another train, battering the sleepy officials with questions, and only knocking up against indifference. Whatever he did he would arrive too late. Too late for Olivier. He could not even manage to catch Manousse. He would be arrested first. What was he to do? Which way to turn? To go on? To go back? What was the use? What was the use? . . . He thought

of giving himself up to a gendarme who went past him. He was held back by an obscure instinct for life which bade him return to Switzerland. There was no train in either direction for a few hours. Christophe sat down in the waiting-room, could not keep still, left the station, and blindly followed the road on through the night. He found himself in the middle of a bare countryside—fields, broken here and there with clumps of pines, the vanguard of a forest. He plunged into it. He had hardly gone more than a few steps when he flung himself down on the ground and cried:

“Olivier!”

He lay across the path and sobbed.

A long time afterwards a train whistling in the distance roused him and made him get up. He tried to go back to the station, but took the wrong road. He walked on all through the night. What did it matter to him where he went? He went on walking to keep from thinking, walking, walking, until he could not think, walking on in the hope that he might fall dead. Ah! if only he might die! . . .

At dawn he crossed the frontier. In the distance he saw a town surmounted with towers and steeples and factory chimneys, from which the thick smoke streamed like black rivers, monotonously, all in the same direction across the gray sky under the rain. He was very near a collapse. Just then he remembered that he knew a German doctor, one Erich Braun, who lived in the town and had written to him the year before, after one of his successes, to remind him of their old acquaintance. Dull though Braun might be, little though he might enter into his life, yet like a wounded animal, Christophe made a supreme effort before he gave in to reach the house of some one who was not altogether a stranger.

Under the cloud of smoke and rain, he entered the gray and red city. He walked through it, seeing nothing, asking his way, losing himself, going back, wandering aimlessly. He was at the end of his tether. For the last time he screwed up his will that was so near to breaking-point to

climb up the steep alleys, and the stairs which went to the top of a stiff little hill, closely overbuilt with houses round a gloomy church. There were sixty red stone steps in threes and sixes. Between each little flight of steps was a narrow platform for the door of a house. On each platform Christophe stopped swaying to take breath. Far over his head, above the church tower, crows were whirling.

At last he came upon the name he was looking for. He knocked.—The alley was in darkness. In utter weariness he closed his eyes. All was dark within him. . . . Ages passed.

The narrow door was opened. A woman appeared on the threshold. Her face was in darkness: but her outline was sharply shown against the background of a little garden which could be clearly seen at the end of a long passage, in the light of the setting sun. She was tall, and stood very erect, without a word, waiting for him to speak. He could not see her eyes: but he felt them taking him in. He asked for Doctor Erich Braun and gave his name. He had great difficulty in getting the words out. He was worn out with fatigue, hunger, and thirst. Without a word the woman went away, and Christophe followed her into a room with closed shutters. In the darkness he bumped into her: his knees and body brushed against her. She went out again and closed the door of the room and left him in the dark. He stayed quite still, for fear of knocking something over, leaning against the wall with his forehead against the soft hangings: his ears buzzed: the darkness seemed alive and throbbing to his eyes.

Overhead he heard a chair being moved, an exclamation of surprise, a door slammed. Then came heavy footsteps down the stairs.

"Where is he?" asked a voice that he knew.

The door of the room was opened once more.

"What! You left him in the dark! Anna! Good gracious! A light!"

Christophe was so weak, he was so utterly wretched, that the sound of the man's loud voice, cordial as it was, brought him comfort in his misery. He gripped the hand that was held out to him. The two men looked at each other.

Braun was a little man: he had a red face with a black, scrubby and untidy beard, kind eyes twinkling behind spectacles, a broad, bumpy, wrinkled, worried, inexpressive brow, hair carefully plastered down and parted right down to his neck. He was very ugly: but Christophe was very glad to see him and to be shaking hands with him. Braun made no effort to conceal his surprise.

"Good Heavens! How changed he is! What a state he is in!"

"I'm just come from Paris," said Christophe. "I'm a fugitive."

"I know, I know. We saw the papers. They said you were caught. Thank God! You've been much in our thoughts, mine and Anna's."

He stopped and made Christophe known to the silent creature who had admitted him:

"My wife."

She had stayed in the doorway of the room with a lamp in her hand. She had a taciturn face with a firm chin. The light fell on her brown hair with its reddish shades of color, and on her pallid cheeks. She held out her hand to Christophe stiffly with the elbow close against her side: he took it without looking at her. He was almost done.

"I came . . ." he tried to explain. "I thought you would be so kind . . . if it isn't putting you out too much . . . as to put me up for a day—"

Braun did not let him finish.

"A day! . . . Twenty days, fifty, as long as you like. As long as you are in this country you shall stay in our house: and I hope you will stay for a long time. It is an honor and a great happiness for us."

Christophe was overwhelmed by his kind words. He flung himself into Braun's arms.

"My dear Christophe, my dear Christophe!" said Braun. . . . "He is weeping. . . . Well, well what is it? . . . Anna! Anna! . . . Quick, he has fainted. . . ."

Christophe had collapsed in his host's arms. He had succumbed to the fainting fit which had been imminent for several hours.

When he opened his eyes again he was lying in a great bed. A smell of wet earth came up through the open window. Braun was bending over him.

"Forgive me," murmured Christophe, trying to get up.

"He is dying of hunger!" cried Braun.

The woman went out and returned with a cup and gave him to drink. Braun held his head. Christophe was restored to life: but his exhaustion was stronger than his hunger: hardly was his head laid back on the pillow than he went to sleep. Braun and his wife watched over him: then, seeing that he only needed rest, they left him.

Christophe was alone once more, and sank back into his mortal weariness. His thoughts were veiled by the mist of suffering. He wore himself out in trying to understand. . . . "Why had he known him? Why had he loved him? What good had Antoinette's devotion been? What was the meaning of all the lives and generations,—so much experience and hope—ending in that life, dragged down with it into the void?" . . . Life was meaningless. Death was meaningless. A man was blotted out, shuffled out of existence, a whole family disappeared from the face of the earth, leaving no trace. Impossible to tell whether it is more odious or more grotesque. He burst into a fit of angry laughter, laughter of hatred and despair. His impotence in the face of such sorrow, his sorrow in the face of such impotence, were dragging him down to death. His heart was broken. . . .

Christophe tried to pick up the threads of life again. . . . It was utterly exhausting! He felt old, as old as the world! . . . In the morning when he got up and saw himself in the mirror he was disgusted with his body, his gestures, his idiotic figure. Get up, dress, to what end? . . . He tried desperately to work: it made him sick. What was the good of creation, when everything ends in nothing? Music had become impossible for him. Art—(and everything else)—can only be rightly judged in unhappiness. Unhappiness is the touchstone. Only then do we know those who can stride across the ages, those who are stronger than death. Very few bear the test. In unhappiness we are struck by the medi-

ocrity of certain souls upon whom we had counted—(and of the artists we had loved, who had been like friends to our lives).—Who survives? How hollow does the beauty of the world ring under the touch of sorrow!

But sorrow grows weary, the force goes from its grip. Christophe's nerves were relaxed. He slept, slept unceasingly. It seemed that he would never succeed in satisfying his hunger for sleep.

At last one night he slept so profoundly that he did not wake up until well on into the afternoon of the next day. The house was empty. Braun and his wife had gone out. The window was open, and the smiling air was quivering with light. Christophe felt that a crushing weight had been lifted from him.

As soon as he had regained his hold on life he had to look about him for a means of living. There could be no question of his leaving the town. Switzerland was the safest shelter for him: and where else could he have found more devoted hospitality?—But his pride could not suffer the idea of his being any further a burden upon his friend. In spite of Braun's protestations, and his refusal to accept any payment, he could not rest until he had found enough pupils to permit of his paying his hosts for his board and lodging. It was not an easy matter. The story of his revolutionary escapade had been widely circulated: and the worthy families of the place were reluctant to admit a man who was regarded as dangerous, or at any rate extraordinary, and, in consequence, not quite "respectable," to their midst. However, his fame as a musician and Braun's good offices gained him access to four or five of the less timorous or more curious families, who were perhaps artistically snobbish enough to desire to gain particularity. They were none the less careful to keep an eye on him, and to maintain a respectable distance between master and pupils.

The Braun household fell into a methodically ordered existence. In the morning each member of it went about his business: the doctor on his rounds. Christophe to his pupils Madame Braun to the market and about her charitable works. Christophe used to return about one, a little before

Braun, who would not allow them to wait for him; and he used to sit down to dinner alone with the wife. He did not like that at all: for she was not sympathetic to him, and he could never find anything to say to her. She took no trouble to remove his impression, though it was impossible for her not to be aware of it; she never bothered to put herself out in dress or in mind to please him: she never spoke to Christophe first: her notable lack of charm in movement and dress, her awkwardness, her coldness, would have repelled any man who was as sensitive as Christophe to the charm of women. When he remembered the sparkling elegance of the Parisian women, he could not help thinking, as he looked at Anna:

"How ugly she is!"

Yet that was unjust: and he was not slow to notice the beauty of her hair, her hands, her mouth, her eyes,—on the rare occasions when he chanced to meet her gaze, which she always averted at once. But his opinion was never modified. As a matter of politeness he forced himself to speak to her: he labored to find subjects of conversation: she never gave him the smallest assistance. Several times he tried to ask her about the town, her husband, herself: he could get nothing out of her. She would make the most trivial answers: she would make an effort to smile: but the effort was painfully evident; her smile was forced, her voice was hollow: she drawled and dragged every word: her every sentence was followed by a painful silence. At last Christophe only spoke to her as little as possible; and she was grateful to him for it. It was a great relief to both of them when the doctor came in. He was always in a good humor, talkative, busy, vulgar, worthy. He ate, drank, talked, laughed, plentifully. Anna used to talk to him a little: but they hardly ever touched on anything but the food in front of them or the price of things. Sometimes Braun would jokingly tease her about her pious works and the minister's sermons. Then she would stiffen herself, and relapse into an offended silence until the end of the meal. More often the doctor would talk about his patients: he would delight in describing repulsive cases, with a pleasant

elaboration of detail which used to exasperate Christophe. Then he would throw his napkin on the table and get up, making faces of disgust which simply delighted the teller. Braun would stop at once, and soothe his friend and laugh. At the next meal he would begin again. His hospital pleasantries seemed to have the power to enliven the impassive Anna. She would break her silence with a sudden nervous laugh, which was something animal in quality. Perhaps she felt no less disgust than Christophe at the things that made her laugh.

In the afternoon Christophe had very few pupils. Then, as a rule, he would stay at home with Anna, while the doctor went out. They never saw each other. They used to go about their separate business. At first Braun had begged Christophe to give his wife a few lessons on the piano: she was, he said, an excellent musician. Christophe asked Anna to play him something. She did not need to be pressed, although she disliked doing it: but she did it with her usual ungraciousness: she played mechanically, with an incredible lack of sensibility: each note was like another: there was no sort of rhythm or expression: when she had to turn the page she stopped short in the middle of a bar, made no haste about it, and went on with the next note. Christophe was so exasperated by it that he was hard put to it to keep himself from making an insulting remark: he could not help going out of the room before she had finished. She was not put out, but went on imperturbably to the very last note, and seemed to be neither hurt nor indignant at his rudeness: she hardly seemed to have noticed it. But the matter of music was never again mentioned between them. Sometimes in the afternoons when Christophe was out and returned unexpectedly, he would find Anna practising the piano, with icy, dull tenacity, going over and over one passage fifty times, and never by any chance showing the least animation. She never played when she knew that Christophe was at home. She devoted all the time that was not consecrated to her religious duties to her household work. She used to sew, and mend, and darn, and look after the servant: she had a mania for tidiness and cleanliness. Her husband

thought her a fine woman, a little odd—"like all women," he used to say—but "like all women," devoted. On that last point Christophe made certain reservations *in petto*: such psychology seemed to him too simple; but he told himself that, after all, it was Braun's affair; and he gave no further thought to the matter.

One evening when he was improvising at the piano, Anna got up and went out, as she often did when Christophe was playing. Apparently his music bored her. Christophe had ceased to notice it: he was indifferent to anything she might think. He went on playing: then he had an idea which he wished to write down, and stopped short and hurried up to his room for the necessary paper. As he opened the door into the next room and, with head down, rushed into the darkness, he bumped violently against a figure standing motionless just inside. Anna. . . . The shock and the surprise made her cry out. Christophe was anxious to know if he had hurt her, and took her hands in his. Her hands were frozen. She seemed to shiver,—no doubt from the shock. She muttered a vague explanation of her presence there:

"I was looking in the dining-room. . . ."

He did not hear what she was looking for: and perhaps she did not say what it was. It seemed to him odd that she should go about looking for something without a light. But he was used to Anna's singular ways and paid no attention to it.

An hour later he returned to the little parlor where he used to spend the evening with Braun and Anna. He sat at the table near the lamp, writing. Anna was on his right at the table, sewing, with her head bent over her work. Behind them, in an armchair, near the fire, Braun was reading a magazine. They were all three silent. At intervals they could hear the pattering of the rain on the gravel in the garden. To get away from her Christophe sat with his back turned to Anna. Opposite him on the wall was a mirror which reflected the table, the lamp, the two faces bending over their work. It seemed to Christophe that Anna was looking at him. At first he did not pay much attention to it; then, as he

could not shake off the idea, he began to feel uneasy and he looked up at the mirror and saw. . . . She *was* looking at him. And in such a way! He was petrified with amazement, held his breath, watched her. She did not know that he was watching her. The light of the lamp was cast upon her pale face, the silent solemnity of which seemed now to be fiercely concentrated. Her eyes—those strange eyes that he had never been able squarely to see—were fixed upon him: they were dark blue, with large pupils, and the expression in them was burning and hard: they were fastened upon him, searching through him with dumb insistent ardor. Her eyes? Could they be her eyes? He saw them and could not believe it. Did he really see them? He turned suddenly. . . . Her eyes were lowered. He tried to talk to her, to force her to look up at him. Impassively she replied without raising her eyes from her work or from their refuge behind the impenetrable shadow of her bluish eyelids with their short thick lashes. If Christophe had not been quite positive of what he had seen, he would have believed that he had been the victim of an illusion. But he knew what he had seen, and he could not explain it away.

However, as his mind was engrossed in his work and he found Anna very uninteresting, the strange impression made on him did not occupy him for long.

A week later Christophe was trying over a song he had just composed, on the piano. Braun, who had a mania, due partly to marital vanity and partly to love of teasing, for worrying his wife to sing and play, had been particularly insistent that evening. As a rule Anna only replied with a curt "No"; after which she would not even trouble to reply to his requests, entreaties, and pleasantries: she would press her lips together and seem not to hear. On this occasion, to Braun's and Christophe's astonishment, she folded up her work, got up, and went to the piano. She sang the song which she had never even read. It was a sort of miracle:—*the* miracle. The deep tones of her voice bore not the faintest resemblance to the rather raucous and husky voice in which she spoke. With absolute sureness from the very first note, without a shade of difficulty, without the smallest

effort, she endued the melody with a grandeur that was both moving and pure: and she rose to an intensity of passion which made Christophe shiver: for it seemed to him to be the very voice of his own heart. He looked at her in amazement while she was singing, and at last, for the first time, he saw her as she was. He saw her dark eyes in which there was kindled a light of wildness, he saw her wide, passionate mouth with its clear-cut lips, the voluptuous, rather heavy and cruel smile, her strong white teeth, her beautiful strong hands, one of which was laid on the rack of the piano, and the sturdy frame of her body cramped by her clothes, emaciated by a life of economy and poverty, though it was easy to divine the youth, the vigor, and the harmony, that were concealed by her gown.

She stopped singing, and went and sat down with her hands folded in her lap. Braun complimented her: but to his way of thinking there had been a lack of softness in her singing. Christophe said nothing. He sat watching her. She smiled vaguely, knowing that he was looking at her. All the evening there was a complete silence between them. She knew quite well that she had risen above herself, or rather, that she had been "herself," for the first time. And she could not understand why.

From that day on Christophe began to observe Anna closely. She had relapsed into her sullenness, her cold indifference, and her mania for work, which exasperated even her husband, while beneath it all she lulled the obscure thoughts of her troubled nature. It was in vain that Christophe watched her, he never found her anything but the stiff ordinary woman of their first acquaintance. Sometimes she would sit lost in thought, doing nothing, with her eyes staring straight in front of her. They would leave her so, and come back a quarter of an hour later and find her just the same: she would never stir. When her husband asked her what she was thinking of, she would rouse herself from her torpor and smile and say that she was thinking of nothing. And she spoke the truth.

There was nothing capable of upsetting her equanimity.

One day when she was dressing, her spirit-lamp burst. In an instant Anna was a mass of flames. The maid rushed away screaming for help. Braun lost his head, flung himself about, shouted and yelled, and almost fell ill. Anna tore away the hooks of her dressing-gown, slipped off her skirt just as it was beginning to burn, and stamped on it. When Christophe ran in excitedly with a water-bottle which he had blindly seized, he found Anna standing on a chair, in her petticoat with her arms bare, calmly putting out the burning curtains with her hands. She got burnt, said nothing about it, and only seemed to be put out at being seen in such a costume. She blushed, awkwardly covered her shoulders with her arms, and with an air of offended dignity ran away into the next room. Christophe admired her calmness: but he could not tell whether it proved her courage or her insensibility. He was inclined to the latter explanation. Indeed, Anna seemed to take no interest in anything, or in other people, or in herself. Christophe doubted even whether she had a heart.

Christophe did not renew the experiment of hearing Anna sing. He was afraid . . . of disillusion, or what? He could not tell. Anna was just as fearful. She would never stay in the room when he began to play.

But one evening in November, as he was reading by the fire, he saw Anna sitting with her sewing in her lap, deep in one of her reveries. She was looking blankly in front of her, and Christophe thought he saw in her eyes the strangely burning light of the other evening. He closed his book. She felt his eyes upon her, and picked up her sewing. With her eyelids down she saw everything. He got up and said:

"Come."

She stared at him, and there was still a little uneasiness in her eyes: she understood, and followed him.

"Where are you going?" asked Braun.

"To the piano," replied Christophe.

He played. She sang. At once he found her just as she had been on the first occasion. She entered the heroic world of music as a matter of course, as though it were her own.

He tested her yet further, and went on to a second song, then to a third, more passionate, which let loose in her the whole gamut of passion, uplifting both herself and him: then, as they reached a very paroxysm, he stopped short and asked her, staring straight into her eyes:

"Tell me, what woman are you?"

Anna replied:

"I do not know."

He said brutally:

"What is there in you that makes you sing like that?"

She replied:

"Only what you put there to make me sing."

"Yes? Well, it is not out of place. I'm wondering whether I created it or you. How do you come to think of such things?"

"I don't know. I think I am no longer myself when I am singing."

"I think it is only then that you are yourself."

They said no more. Her cheeks were wet with a slight perspiration. Her bosom heaved, but she spoke no word. She stared at the lighted candles, and mechanically scratched away the wax that had trickled down the side of the candlestick. He drummed on the keys as he sat looking at her. They exchanged a few awkward remarks, brusquely and roughly, and then they tried a commonplace remark or two, and finally relapsed into silence, being fearful of probing any farther. . . .

Next day they hardly spoke: they stole glances at each other in a sort of dread. But they made it a habit to play and sing together in the evening. Before long they began in the afternoon, giving a little more time to it each day. Always the same incomprehensible passion would take possession of her with the very first bars, and set her flaming from head to foot, and, while the music lasted, make of the ordinary little woman an imperious Venus, the incarnation of all the furies of the soul. Braun was surprised at Anna's sudden craze for singing, but did not take the trouble to discover any explanation for a mere feminine caprice: he

was often present at their little concerts, marked time with his head, gave his advice, and was perfectly happy, although he would have preferred softer, sweeter music: such an expenditure of energy seemed to him exaggerated and unnecessary. Christophe breathed freely in the atmosphere of danger: but he was losing his head: he was weakened by the crisis through which he had passed, and could not resist, and lost consciousness of what was happening to him without perceiving what was happening to Anna. One afternoon, in the middle of a song, with all the frantic ardor of it in full blast, she suddenly stopped, and left the room without making any explanation. Christophe waited for her: she did not return. Half an hour later, as he was going down the passage past Anna's room, through the half-open door he saw her absorbed in grim prayer, with all expression frozen from her face.

For some weeks Anna looked very unwell. Her face grew thin and pale. She avoided both Christophe and Braun. She spent her days in her room, lost in thought, and she never replied when she was spoken to. Usually Braun did not take much notice of her feminine caprices. He would explain them to Christophe at length. Like all men fated to be deceived by women he flattered himself that he knew them through and through.

Braun insisted that his wife make a day's excursion into the outskirts of the town. She was so bored with him that she consented for the sake of peace. It was arranged that they should go on the Sunday. At the last moment, the doctor, who had been looking forward to it with childlike glee, was detained by an urgent case of illness. Christophe went with Anna.

It was a fine winter day with no snow: a pure cold air, a clear sky, a flaming sun, and an icy wind. They went out on a little local railway which took them to one of the lines of blue hills which formed a distant halo round the town. Their compartment was full: they were separated. They did not speak to each other. Anna was in a gloomy mood: the day before she had declared, to Braun's surprise, that she

would not go to church on Sunday. For the first time in her life she missed a service. Was it revolt? . . . Who could tell what struggles were taking place in her? She stared blankly at the seat in front of her, she was pale: she was eating her heart out.

They got out of the train. The coldness and antagonism between them did not disappear during the first part of their walk. They stepped out side by side: she walked with a firm stride and looked at nothing: her hands were free: she swung her arms: her heels rang out on the frozen earth. —Gradually her face quickened into life. The swiftness of their pace brought the color to her pale cheeks. Her lips parted to drink in the keen air. At the turn of a zigzag path she began to climb straight up the hillside like a goat; she scrambled along the edge of a quarry, where she was in great danger of falling, clinging to the shrubs. Christophe followed her. She climbed faster and faster, slipping, stopping herself by clutching at the grass with her hands. Christophe shouted to her to stop. She made no reply, but went on climbing on all fours. They passed through the mists which hung above the valley like a silvery gauze rent here and there by the bushes: and they stood in the warm sunlight of the uplands. When she reached the summit she stopped: her face was aglow: her mouth was open, and she was breathing heavily. Ironically she looked down at Christophe scaling the slope, took off her cloak, flung it at him, then without giving him time to take his breath, she darted on. Christophe ran after her. They warmed to the game: the air intoxicated them. She plunged down a steep slope: the stones gave way under her feet: she did not falter, she slithered, jumped, sped down like an arrow. Every now and then she would dart a glance behind her to see how much she had gained on Christophe. He was close upon her. She plunged into a wood. The dead leaves crackled under their footsteps: the branches which she thrust aside whipped back into his face. She stumbled over the roots of a tree. He caught her. She struggled, lunging out with hands and feet, struck him hard, trying to knock him off: she screamed and laughed. Her bosom heaved against him: for

a moment their cheeks touched: he tasted the sweat that lay on Anna's brow: he breathed the scent of her moist hair. She pushed away from him and looked at him, unmoved, with defiant eyes. He was amazed at her strength, which all went for nothing in her ordinary life.

They went to the nearest village, joyfully trampling the dry stubble ^{the}crisping beneath their feet. In front of them whirled the crows who were ransacking the fields. The sun was burning, the wind was biting. He held Anna's arm. She had on a rather thin dress: through the stuff he could feel the moisture and the tingling warmth of her body. He wanted her to put on her cloak once more: she refused, and in bravado undid the hooks at her neck. They lunched at an inn, the sign of which bore the figure of a "wild man" (*Zum wilden Mann*). A little pine-tree grew in front of the door. The dining-room was decorated with German quatrains, and two chromolithographs, one of which was sentimental: *In the Spring (Im Frühling)*, and the other patriotic: *The Battle of Saint Jacques*, and a crucifix with a skull at the foot of the cross. Anna had a voracious appetite, such as Christophe had never known her to have. They drank freely of the ordinary white wine. After their meal they set out once more across the fields, in a blithe spirit of companionship. In neither was there any equivocal thought. They were thinking only of the pleasure of their walk, the singing in their blood, and the whipping, nipping air. Anna's tongue was loosed. She was no longer on her guard: she said just whatever came into her mind.

She talked about her childhood, and how her grandmother used to take her to the house of an old friend who lived near the cathedral: and while the old ladies talked they sent her into the garden over which there hung the shadow of the *Münster*. She used to sit in a corner and never stir: she used to listen to the shivering of the leaves, and watch the busy swarming insects: and she used to be both pleased and afraid.—(She made no mention of her fear of devils: her imagination was obsessed by it: she had been told that they prowled round churches but never dared enter: and she used to believe that they appeared in the

shape of animals: spiders, lizards, ants, all the hideous creatures that swarmed about her, under the leaves, over the earth, or in the crannies of the walls).—Then she told him about the house she used to live in, and her sunless room: she remembered it with pleasure: she used to spend many sleepless nights there, telling herself things. . . .

"What things?"

"Silly things."

"Tell me."

She shook her head in refusal.

"Why not?"

She blushed, then laughed, and added:

"In the daytime too, while I was at work."

She thought for a moment, laughed once more, and then said:

"They were silly things, bad things."

He said, jokingly:

"Weren't you afraid?"

"Of what?"

"Of being damned?"

The expression in her eyes froze.

"You mustn't talk of that," she said.

He turned the conversation. He marveled at the strength she had shown a short while before in their scuffle. She resumed her confiding expression and told him of her girlish achievements—(she said "boyish," for, when she was a child she had always longed to join in the games and fights of the boys).—On one occasion when she was with a little boy who was a head taller than herself she had suddenly struck him with her fist, hoping that he would strike her back. But he ran away yelling that she was beating him. Once, again, in the country she had climbed on to the back of a black cow as she was grazing: the terrified beast flung her against a tree, and she had narrowly escaped being killed. Once she took it into her head to jump out of a first-floor window because she had dared herself to do it: she was lucky enough to get off with a sprain. She used to invent strange, dangerous gymnastics when she was left alone

in the house: she used to subject her body to all sorts of queer experiments.

"Who would think it of you now, to see you looking so solemn? . . ."

"Oh!" she said, "if you were to see me sometimes when I am alone in my room!"

"What? Even now?"

She laughed. She asked him—jumping from one subject to another—if he were a shot.

He told her that he never shot. She said that she had once shot at a blackbird with a gun and had wounded it. He waxed indignant.

"Oh!" she said. "What does it matter?"

"Have you no heart?"

"I don't know."

"Don't you ever think the beasts are living creatures like ourselves?"

"Yes," she said. "Certainly. I wanted to ask you: do you think the beasts have souls?"

"Yes. I think so."

"The minister says not. But I think they have souls. . . . Sometimes," she added, "I think I must have been an animal in a previous existence."

He began to laugh.

"There's nothing to laugh at," she said (she laughed too). "That is one of the stories I used to tell myself when I was little. I used to pretend to be a cat, a dog, a bird, a foal, a heifer. I was conscious of all their desires. I wanted to be in their skins or their feathers for a little while: and it used to be as though I really was. You can't understand that?"

"You are a strange creature. But if you feel such kinship with the beasts how can you bear to hurt them?"

"One is always hurting some one. Some people hurt me. I hurt other people. That's the way of the world. I don't complain. We can't afford to be squeamish in life! I often hurt myself for the pleasure of it."

"Hurt yourself?"

"Myself. One day I hammered a nail into my hand, here."

"Why?"

"There wasn't any reason."

(She did not tell him that she had been trying to crucify herself.)

"Give me your hand," she said.

"What do you want it for?"

"Give it me."

He gave her his hand. She took it and crushed it until he cried out. They played, like peasants, at seeing how much they could hurt each other. They were happy and had no ulterior thought. The rest of the world, the fetters of their ordinary life, the sorrows of the past, fear of the future, the gathering storm within themselves, all had disappeared.

They had walked several miles, but they were not at all tired. Suddenly she stopped, flung herself down on the ground, and lay full length on the stubble, and said no more. She lay on her back with her hands behind her head and looked up at the sky. Oh! the peace of it, and the sweetness! . . . A few yards away a spring came bubbling up in an intermittent stream, like an artery beating, now faintly, now more strongly. The horizon took on a pearly hue. A mist hung over the purple earth from which the black naked trees stood out. The late winter sun was shining, the little pale gold sun sinking down to rest. Like gleaming arrows the birds cleft the air. The gentle voices of the country bells called and answered calling from village to village. . . . Christophe sat near Anna and looked down at her. She gave no thought to him. She was full of a heartfelt joy. Her beautiful lips smiled silently. He thought:

"Is that you? I do not know you."

"Nor I. Nor I. I think I must be some one else. I am no longer afraid: I am no longer afraid of Him. . . . Ah! How He stifled me, how He made me suffer! I seemed to have been nailed down in my coffin. . . . Now I can breathe: this body and this heart are mine. My body. My dear body. My heart is free and full of love. There is so much happiness in me! And I knew it not. I never knew myself! What have you done to me? . . ."

So he thought he could hear her softly sighing to her-

self. But she was thinking of nothing, only that she was happy, only that all was well.

The evening had begun to fall. Behind the gray and lilac veils of mist, about four o'clock, the sun, weary of life, was setting. Christophe got up and went to Anna. He bent down to her. She turned her face to him, still dizzy with looking up into the vast sky over which she seemed to have been hanging. A few seconds passed before she recognized him. Then her eyes stared at him with an enigmatic smile that told him of the unease that was in her. To escape the knowledge of it he closed his eyes for a moment. When he opened them again she was still looking at him: and it seemed to him that for many days they had so looked into each other's eyes. It was as though they were reading each other's soul. But they refused to admit what they had read there.

He held out his hand to her. She took it without a word. They went back to the village, the towers of which they could see shaped like the pope's nose in the heart of the valley: one of the towers had an empty storks' nest on the top of its roof of mossy tiles, looking just like a toque on a woman's head. At a cross-roads just outside the village they passed a fountain above which stood a little Catholic saint, a wooden Magdalene, graciously and a little mincingly holding out her arms. With an instinctive movement Anna responded to the gesture and held out her arms also, and she climbed on to the curb and filled the arms of the pretty little goddess with branches of holly and mountain-ash with such of their red berries as the birds and the frost had spared.

On the road they passed little groups of peasants and peasant women in their Sunday clothes: women with brown skins, very red cheeks, thick plaits coiled round their heads, light dresses, and hats with flowers. They wore white gloves and red cuffs. They were singing simple songs with shrill placid voices not very much in tune. In a stable a cow was mooing. A child with whooping-cough was coughing in a house. A little farther on there came up the nasal sound of a clarionet and a cornet. There was dancing in the village square between the little inn and the cemetery. Four musicians, perched on a table, were playing a tune. Anna and

Christophe sat in front of the inn and watched the dancers. The couples were jostling and slanging each other vociferously. The girls were screaming for the pleasure of making a noise. The men drinking were beating time on the tables with their fists. At any other time such ponderous coarse joy would have disgusted Anna: but now she loved it: she had taken off her hat and was watching eagerly. Christophe poked fun at the burlesque solemnity of the music and the musicians. He fumbled in his pockets and produced a pencil and began to make lines and dots on the back of a hotel bill: he was writing dance music. The paper was soon covered: he asked for more, and these too he covered like the first with his big scrawling writing. Anna looked over his shoulder with her face near his and hummed over what he wrote: she tried to guess how the phrases would end, and clapped her hands when she guessed right or when her guesses were falsified by some unexpected sally. When he had done Christophe took what he had written to the musicians. They were honest Suabians who knew their business, and they made it out without much difficulty. The melodies were sentimental, and of a burlesque humôr, with strongly accented rhythms, punctuated, as it were, with bursts of laughter. It was impossible to resist their impetuous fun: nobody's feet could help dancing. Anna rushed into the throng; she gripped the first pair of hands held out to her and whirled about like a mad thing; a tortoise-shell pin dropped out of her hair and a few locks of it fell down and hung about her face. Christophe never took his eyes off her: he marveled at the fine healthy animal who hitherto had been condemned to silence and immobility by a pitiless system of discipline: he saw her as no one had ever seen her, as she really was under her borrowed mask: a Bacchante, drunk with life. She called to him. He ran to her and put his arms round her waist. They danced and danced until they whirled crashing into a wall. They stopped, dazed. Night was fully come. They rested for a moment and then said good-bye to the company. Anna, who was usually so stiff with the common people, partly from embarrassment, partly from contempt, held out her hand to the musicians,

the host of the inn, the village boys with whom she had been dancing.

Once more they were alone under the brilliant frozen sky retracing the paths across the fields by which they had come in the morning. Anna was still excited. She talked less and less, and then ceased altogether, as though she had succumbed to fatigue or to the mysterious emotion of the night. She leaned affectionately on Christophe. As they were going down the slope up which they had so blithely scrambled a few hours before, she sighed. They approached the station. As they came to the first house he stopped and looked at her. She looked up at him and smiled sadly. The train was just as crowded as it had been before, and they could not talk. He sat opposite her and devoured her with his eyes. Her eyes were lowered: she raised them and looked at him when she felt his eyes upon her; then she glanced away and he could not make her look at him again. She sat gazing out into the night. A vague smile hovered about her lips which showed a little weariness at the corners. Then her smile disappeared. Her expression became mournful. He thought her mind must be engrossed by the rhythm of the train and he tried to speak to her. She replied coldly, without turning her head, with a single word. He tried to persuade himself that her fatigue was responsible for the change: but he knew that it was for a very different reason. The nearer they came to the town the more he saw Anna's face grow cold, and life die down in her, and all her beautiful body with its savage grace drop back into its casing of stone. She did not make use of the hand he held out to her as she stepped out of the carriage. They returned home in silence.

A few days later, about four o'clock in the evening, they were alone together. Braun had gone out. Since the day before the town had been shrouded in a pale greenish fog. The murmuring of the invisible river came up. The lights of the electric trams glared through the mist. The light of day was dead, stifled: time seemed to be wiped out: it was one of those hours when men lose all consciousness of

reality, an hour which is outside the march of the ages. After the cutting wind of the preceding days, the moist air had suddenly grown warmer, too damp and too soft. The sky was filled with snow, and bent under the load.

They were alone together in the drawing-room, the cold cramped taste of which was the reflection of that of its mistress. They said nothing. He was reading. She was sewing. He got up and went to the window: he pressed his face against the panes, and stood so dreaming: he was stupefied and heavy with the dull light which was cast back from the darkling sky upon the livid earth: his thoughts were uneasy: he tried in vain to fix them: they escaped him. He was filled with a bitter agony: he felt that he was being engulfed: and in the depths of his being, from the chasm of the heap of ruins came a scorching wind in slow gusts. He turned his back on Anna: she could not see him, she was engrossed in her work; but a faint thrill passed through her body: she pricked herself several times with her needle, but she did not feel it. They were both fascinated by the approaching danger.

He threw off his stupor and took a few strides across the room. The piano attracted him and made him fearful. He looked away from it. As he passed it his hand could not resist it, and touched a note. The sound quivered like a human voice. Anna trembled, and let her sewing fall. Christophe was already seated and playing. Without seeing her, he knew that Anna had got up, that she was coming towards him, that she was by his side. Before he knew what he was doing, he had begun the religious and passionate melody that she had sung the first time she had revealed herself to him: he improvised a fugue with variations on the theme. Without his saying a word to her, she began to sing. They lost all sense of their surroundings. The sacred frenzy of the music had them in its clutches. . . .

The melody ended. Silence. . . . While she was singing she had laid her hand on Christophe's shoulder. They dared not move: and each felt the other trembling. Suddenly—in a flash—she bent down to him, he turned to her: their lips met: he drank her breath. . . .

She flung away from him and fled. He stayed, not stirring, in the dark. Braun returned. They sat down to dinner. Christophe was incapable of thought. Anna seemed absent-minded: she was looking "elsewhere." Shortly after dinner she went to her room. Christophe found it impossible to stay alone with Braun, and went upstairs also.

About midnight the doctor was called from his bed to a patient. Christophe heard him go downstairs and out. It had been snowing ever since six o'clock. The houses and the streets were under a shroud. The air was as though it were padded with cotton-wool. Not a step, not a carriage could be heard outside. The town seemed dead. Christophe could not sleep. He had a feeling of terror which grew from minute to minute. He could not stir. He lay stiff in his bed, on his back, with his eyes wide open. A metallic light cast up from the white earth and roofs fell upon the walls of the room. . . . An imperceptible noise made him tremble. Only a man at a feverish tension could have heard it. Came a soft rustling on the floor of the passage. Christophe sat up in bed. The faint noise came nearer, stopped; a board creaked. There was some one behind the door: some one waiting. . . . Absolute stillness for a few seconds, perhaps for several minutes. . . . Christophe could not breathe, he broke out into a sweat. Outside flakes of snow brushed the window as with a wing. A hand fumbled with the door and opened it. There appeared a white form, and it came slowly forward: it halted a few yards away from him. Christophe could see nothing clearly: but he could hear her breathing: and he could hear his own heart thumping. She came nearer to him; once more she halted. Their faces were so near that their breath mingled. Their eyes sought each other vainly in the darkness. . . . She fell into his arms. In silence, without a word, they hugged each other close, frenziedly. . . .

An hour, two hours, a century later, the door of the house was opened. Anna broke from the embrace in which they were locked, slipped away, and left Christophe without a word, just as she had come. He heard her bare feet moving away, just skimming the floor in her swift flight. She

regained her room, and there Braun found her in her bed, apparently asleep. So she lay through the night, with eyes wide open, breathless, still, in her narrow bed near the sleeping Braun. How many nights had she passed like that!

Christophe could not sleep either. He was utterly in despair. He had always regarded the things of love, and especially marriage, with tragic seriousness. He hated the frivolity of those writers whose art uses adultery as a spicy flavoring. Adultery roused in him a feeling of repulsion which was a combination of his vulgar brutality and high morality. He had always felt a mixture of religious respect and physical disgust for a woman who belonged to another man. The doglike promiscuity in which some of the rich people in Europe lived appalled him. Adultery with the consent of the husband is a filthy thing: without the husband's knowledge it is a base deceit only worthy of a rascally servant hiding away to betray and befoul his master's honor. How often had he not piteously despised those whom he had known to be guilty of such cowardice! He had broken with some of his friends who had thus dishonored themselves in his eyes. . . . And now he too was sullied with the same shameful thing! The circumstances of the crime only made it the more odious. He had come to the house a sick, wretched man. His friend had welcomed him, helped him, given him comfort. His kindness had never flagged. Nothing had been too great a demand upon it. He owed him his very life. And in return he had robbed the man of his honor and his happiness, his poor little domestic happiness! He had basely betrayed him, and with whom? With a woman whom he did not know, did not understand, did not love. . . . Did he not love her? His every drop of blood rose up against him. Love is too faint a word to express the river of fire that rushed through him when he thought of her. It was not love, it was a thousand times a greater thing than love. . . . He was in a whirl all through the night. He got up, dipped his face in the icy water, gasped, and shuddered. The crisis came to a head in an attack of fever.

When he got up, aching all over, he thought that she, even more than he, must be overwhelmed with shame. He went

to the window. The sun was shining down upon the dazzling snow. In the garden Anna was hanging out the clothes on a line. She was engrossed in her work, and seemed to be in no wise put out. She had a dignity in her carriage and her gesture which was quite new to him, and made him, unconsciously, liken her to a moving statue.

They met again at lunch. Braun was away for the whole day. Christophe could not have borne meeting him. He wanted to speak to Anna. But they were not alone: the servant kept going and coming: they had to keep guard on themselves. In vain did Christophe try to catch Anna's eye. She did not look at him or at anything. There was no indication of inward ferment: and always in her smallest movement there was the unaccustomed assurance and nobility. After lunch he hoped they would have an opportunity of speaking: but the servant dallied over clearing away; and when they went into the next room she contrived to follow them: she always had something to fetch or to bring: she stayed bustling in the passage near the half-open door which Anna showed no hurry to shut: it looked as though she were spying on them. Anna sat by the window with her everlasting sewing. Christophe leaned back in an arm-chair with his back to the light, and a book on his knee which he did not attempt to read. Anna could only see his profile, and she noticed the torment in his face as he looked at the wall: and she gave a cruel smile. From the roof of the house and the tree in the garden the melting snow trickled down into the gravel with a thin tinkling noise. Some distance away was the laughter of children chasing each other in the street and snow-balling. Anna seemed to be half-asleep. The silence was torture to Christophe: it hurt him so that he could have cried out.

At last the servant went downstairs and left the house. Christophe got up, turned to Anna, and was about to say: "Anna! Anna! what have we done?"

Anna looked at him: her eyes, which had been obstinately lowered, had just opened: they rested on Christophe, and devoured him hotly, hungrily. Christophe felt his own

eyes burn under the impact, and he reeled: everything that he wanted to say was brushed aside. They came together, and once more they were locked in an embrace. . . .

The shades of the evening were falling. Their blood was still in turmoil. She was lying down, with her dress torn, her arms outstretched. He had buried his face in the pillow, and was groaning aloud. She turned towards him and raised his head, and caressed his eyes and his lips with her fingers: she brought her face close to his, and she stared into his eyes. Her eyes were deep, deep as a lake, and they smiled at each other in utter indifference to pain. They lost consciousness. He was silent. Mighty waves of feeling thrilled through them. . . .

That night, when he was alone in his room, Christophe thought of killing himself.

Next day, as soon as he was up, he went to Anna. Now it was he whose eyes avoided hers. As soon as he met their gaze all that he had to say was banished from his mind. However, he made an effort, and began to speak of the cowardice of what they had done. Hardly had she understood than she roughly stopped his lips with her hand. She flung away from him with a scowl, and her lips pressed together, and an evil expression upon her face. He went on. She flung the work she was holding down on the ground, opened the door, and tried to go out. He caught her hands, closed the door, and said bitterly that she was very lucky to be able to banish from her mind all idea of the evil they had done. She struggled like an animal caught in a trap, and cried angrily:

"Stop! . . . You coward, can't you see how I am suffering? . . . I won't let you speak! Let me go!"

Her face was drawn, her expression was full of hate and fear, like a beast that has been hurt: her eyes would have killed him, if they could.—He let her go. She ran to the opposite corner of the room to take shelter. He had no desire to pursue her. His heart was aching with bitterness and terror. Braun came in. He looked at him, and they stood

stockishly there. Nothing existed for them outside their own suffering.

Christophe went out. Braun and Anna sat down to their meal. In the middle of dinner Braun suddenly got up to open the window. Anna had fainted.

Christophe left the town for a fortnight on the pretext of having been called away. For a whole week Anna remained shut up in her room except for meal-times. She slipped back into consciousness of herself, into her old habits, the old life from which she had thought she had broken away, from which we never break away. In vain did she close her eyes to what she had done. Every day anxiety made further inroads into her heart, and finally took possession of it. On the following Sunday she refused once more to go to church. But the Sunday after that she went, and never omitted it again. She was conquered, but not submissive. God was the enemy,—an enemy from whose power she could not free herself. She went to Him with the sullen anger of a slave who is forced into obedience. During service her face showed nothing but cold hostility: but in the depths of her soul the whole of her religious life was a fierce, dumbly exasperated struggle against the Master whose reproaches persecuted her. She pretended not to hear. She *had* to hear: and bitterly, savagely, with clenched teeth, hard eyes, and a deep frowning furrow in her forehead, she would argue with God. She thought of Christophe with hatred. She could not forgive him for having delivered her for one moment from the prison of her soul, only to let her fall back into it again, to be the prey of its tormentors. She could not sleep; day and night she went over and over the same torturing thoughts: she did not complain: she went on obstinately doing her household work and all her other duties, and throughout maintaining the unyielding and obstinate character of her will in her daily life, the various tasks of which she fulfilled with the regularity of a machine. She grew thin, and seemed to be a prey to some internal malady. Braun questioned her fondly and anxiously: he wanted to sound her. She repulsed him angrily. The greater her

remorse grew for what she had done to him, the more harshly she spoke to him.

Christophe had determined not to return. He wore himself out. He took long runs and violent exercise, rowed, walked, climbed mountains. Nothing was able to quench the fire in him. Christophe could not understand. . . . He did not believe in the inevitability of passion—the idiotic cult of the romantics. He believed that a man can and must fight with all the force of his will. . . . His will! Where was it? Not a trace of it was left. He was possessed. He was stung by the barbs of memory, day and night. The scent of Anna's body was with him everywhere. He was like a dismantled hulk, rolling rudderless, at the mercy of the winds. In vain did he try to escape, he strove mightily, wore himself out in the attempt: he always found himself brought back to the same place, and he shouted to the wind:

"Break me, break me, then! What do you want of me?"

Feverishly he probed into himself. Why, why this woman? . . . Why did he love her? It was not for her qualities of heart or mind. There were any number of better and more intelligent women. It was not for her body. He had had other mistresses more acceptable to his senses. What was it? . . . —"We love because we love."—Yes, but there is a reason, even if it be beyond ordinary human reason. Madness? That means nothing. Why this madness?

After a fortnight of vain efforts to escape, Christophe returned to Anna. He could not live away from her. He was stifled.

And yet he went on struggling. On the evening of his return, they found excuses for not meeting and not dining together: at night they locked their doors in fear and dread. —But love was stronger than they. In the middle of the night she came creeping barefooted, and knocked at his door. She wept silently. He felt the tears coursing down her cheeks. She tried to control herself, but her anguish was too much for her and she sobbed. Under the frightful burden of her grief Christophe forgot his own: he tried to calm her and gave her tender, comfortable words. She moaned:

"I am so unhappy. I wish I were dead. . . ."

Her plaint pierced his heart. He tried to kiss her. She repulsed him:

"I hate you! . . . Why did you ever come?"

She wrenched herself away from him. She turned her back on him and shook with rage and grief. She hated him mortally. Christophe lay still, appalled. In the silence Anna heard his choking breathing: she turned suddenly and flung her arms round his neck:

"Poor Christophe!" she said. "I have made you suffer. . . ."

For the first time he heard pity in her voice.

"Forgive me," she said.

He said:

"We must forgive each other."

She raised herself as though she found it hard to breathe. She sat there, with bowed back, overwhelmed, and said:

"I am ruined. . . . It is God's will. He has betrayed me. . . . What can I do against Him?"

She stayed for a long time like that, then lay down again and did not stir. A faint light proclaimed the dawn. In the half-light he saw her sorrowful face so near his. He murmured:

"The day."

She made no movement.

He said:

"So be it. What does it matter?"

She opened her eyes and left him with an expression of utter weariness. She sat for a moment looking down at the floor. In a dull, colorless voice she said:

"I thought of killing him last night."

He gave a start of terror:

"Anna!" he said.

She was staring gloomily at the window.

"Anna!" he said again. "In God's name! . . . Not him! . . . He is the best of us! . . ."

She echoed:

"Not him. Very well."

They looked at each other.

They had known it for a long time. They had known

where the only way out lay. They could not bear to live a lie. And they had never even considered the possibility of eloping together. They knew perfectly well that that would not solve the problem: for the bitterest suffering came not from the external obstacles that held them apart, but in themselves, in their different souls. It was as impossible for them to live together as to live apart. They were driven into a corner.

From that moment on they never touched each other: the shadow of death was upon them: they were sacred to each other.

But they put off appointing a time for their decision. They kept on saying: "To-morrow, to-morrow. . . ." And they turned their eyes away from their to-morrow. Christophe's mighty soul had wild spasms of revolt: he would not consent to his defeat: he despised suicide, and he could not resign himself to such a pitiful and abrupt conclusion of his splendid life. As for Anna, how could she, unless she were forced, accept the idea of a death which must lead to eternal death? But ruthless necessity was at their heels, and the circle was slowly narrowing about them.

That morning, for the first time since the betrayal, Christophe was left alone with Braun. Until then he had succeeded in avoiding him. He found it intolerable to be with him. He had to make an excuse to avoid eating at the same table: the food stuck in his throat. To shake the man's hand, to eat his bread, to give the kiss of Judas! . . . Most odious for him to think of was not the contempt he had for himself so much as the agony of suffering that Braun must endure if he should come to know. . . . The idea of it crucified him. He knew only too well that poor Braun would never avenge himself, that perhaps he would not even have the strength to hate them: but what an utter wreck of all his life! . . . How would he regard him! Christophe felt that he could not face the reproach in his eyes.—And it was inevitable that sooner or later Braun would be warned. Did he not already suspect something? Seeing him again after

his fortnight's absence Christophe was struck by the change in him: Braun was not the same man. His gaiety had disappeared, or there was something forced in it. At meals he would stealthily glance at Anna, who talked not at all, ate not at all, and seemed to be burning away like the oil in a lamp. With timid, touching kindness he tried to look after her: she rejected his attentions harshly: then he bent his head over his plate and relapsed into silence. Anna could bear it no longer, and flung her napkin on the table in the middle of the meal and left the room. The two men finished their dinner in silence, or pretended to do so, for they ate nothing: they dared not raise their eyes. When they had finished, Christophe was on the point of going when Braun suddenly clasped his arm with both hands and said:

"Christophe!"

Christophe looked at him uneasily.

"Christophe," said Braun again—(his voice was shaking),—"do you know what's the matter with her?"

Christophe stood transfixed: for a moment or two he could find nothing to say. Braun stood looking at him timidly: very quickly he begged his pardon:

"You see a good deal of her, she trusts you. . . ."

Christophe was very near taking Braun's hands and kissing them and begging his forgiveness. Braun saw Christophe's downcast expression, and, at once, he was terrified, and refused to see: he cast him a beseeching look and stammered hurriedly and gasped:

"No, no. You know nothing? Nothing?"

Christophe was overwhelmed and said:

"No."

Oh! the bitterness of not being able to lay bare his offense, to humble himself, since to do so would be to break the heart of the man he had wronged! Oh! the bitterness of being unable to tell the truth, when he could see in the eyes of the man asking him for it, that he could not, would not know the truth! . . .

"Thanks, thank you. I thank you . . ." said Braun.

He stayed with his hands plucking at Christophe's sleeve

as though there was something else he wished to ask, and yet dared not, avoiding his eyes. Then he let go, sighed, and went away.

Christophe was appalled by this new lie. He hastened to Anna. Stammering in his excitement, he told her what had happened. Anna listened gloomily and said:

"Oh, well. He knows. What does it matter?"

"How can you talk like that?" cried Christophe. "It is horrible! I will not have him suffer, whatever it may cost us, whatever it may cost."

Anna grew angry.

"And what if he does suffer? Don't I have to suffer? Let him suffer too!"

They said bitter things to each other. He accused her of loving only herself. She reproached him with thinking more of her husband than of herself.

But a moment later, when he told her that he could not go on living like that, and that he would go and tell the whole story to Braun, then she cried out on him for his selfishness, declaring that she did not care a bit about Christophe's conscience, but was quite determined that Braun should never know.

In spite of her hard words she was thinking as much of Braun as of Christophe. Though she had no real affection for her husband she was fond of him. She had a religious respect for social ties and the duties they involve. Perhaps she did not think that it was the duty of a wife to be kind and to love her husband: but she did think that she was compelled scrupulously to fulfil her household duties and to remain faithful. It seemed to her ignoble to fail in that object as she herself had done.

And even more surely than Christophe she knew that Braun must know everything very soon. It was something to her credit that she concealed the fact from Christophe, either because she did not wish to add to his troubles or more probably because of her pride.

Secluded though the Braun household was, secret though the tragedy might remain that was being enacted there,

some hint of it had trickled away to the outer world. Now the time was coming when public scandal would be afforded an opportunity of discharging itself. The carnival was coming on. In that city, the carnival had preserved up to the time of the events narrated in this history—(it has changed since then)—a character of archaic license and roughness. Faithfully in accordance with its origin, by which it had been a relaxation for the profligacy of the human mind subjugated, wilfully or involuntarily, by reason, it nowhere reached such a pitch of audacity as in the periods and countries in which custom and law, the guardians of reason, weighed most heavily upon the people. The town in which Anna lived was therefore one of its most chosen regions. The more moral stringency paralyzed action and gagged speech, the bolder did action become and speech the more untrammelled during those few days. Everything that was secreted away in the lower depths of the soul, jealousy, secret hate, lewd curiosity, the malicious instincts inherent in the social animal, would burst forth with all the vehemence and joy of revenge. Every man had the right to go out into the streets, and, prudently masked, to nail to the pilory, in full view of the public gaze, the object of his detestation, to lay before all and sundry all that he had found out by a year of patient industry, his whole hoard of scandalous secrets gathered drop by drop. One man would display them on the cars. Another would carry a transparent lantern on which were pasted in writings and drawings the secret history of the town. Another would go so far as to wear a mask in imitation of his enemy, made so easily recognizable that the very gutter-snipes would point him out by name. Slandrous newspapers would appear during the three days. Even the very best people would craftily take part in the game of *Pasquino*. Anna felt the weight of dread. In her own house she knew that she was hemmed in.

Anna's servant was a woman of over forty: her name was Bäbi. Braun believed that she was unshakably devoted. Her gushing manner was strongly in contrast with Anna's coldness. However, she was like her in many things: like her she spoke little and dressed in a severe neat style: like

her she was very pious, and went to service with her, scrupulously fulfilling all her religious duties and nicely attending to her household tasks: she was clean, methodical, and her morals and her kitchen were beyond reproach. In a word she was an exemplary servant and the perfect type of domestic foe. Anna's feminine instinct was hardly ever wrong in her divination of the secret thoughts of women, and she had no illusions about her. They detested each other, knew it, and never let it appear.

On the night of Christophe's return, when Anna, torn by her desire and her emotion, went to him once more in spite of her resolve never to see him again, she walked stealthily, groping along the wall in the darkness: just as she reached Christophe's door, instead of the ordinary cold smooth polished floor, she felt a warm dust softly crunching under her bare feet. She stooped, touched it with her hands, and understood: a thin layer of ashes had been spread for the space of a few yards across the passage. Without knowing it Bäbi had happened on the old device employed in the days of the old Breton songs by Frocin the dwarf, to catch Tristan on his way to Yseult: so true it is that a limited number of types, good and bad, serve for all ages. A remarkable piece of evidence in favor of the wise economy of the universe!—Anna did not hesitate; she did not stop or turn, but went on in a sort of contemptuous bravado: she went to Christophe, told him nothing, in spite of her uneasiness: but when she returned she took the stove brush and carefully effaced every trace of her footsteps in the ashes, after she had crossed over them.—When Anna and Bäbi met next day it was with the usual coldness and the accustomed smile.

Bäbi used sometimes to receive a visit from a relation who was a little older than herself: he fulfilled the function of beadle of the church: during *Gottesdienst* (Divine service) he used to stand sentinel at the church door, wearing a white armlet with black stripes and a silver tassel, leaning on a cane with a curved handle. By trade he was an undertaker. His name was Sami Witschi. He was very tall and thin, with a slight stoop and he had the clean-shaven solemn face of an old peasant. He was very pious and knew

better than any one all the tittle-tattle of the parish. Bäbi and Sami were thinking of getting married: they appreciated each other's serious qualities, and solid faith and malice. But they were in no hurry to make up their minds: they prudently took stock of each other.—Latterly Sami's visits had become more frequent.

The day after Anna had dodged the ingenious trap of the ashes, as she entered the kitchen, the first thing she saw in Sami's hand was the little broom she had used the night before to wipe out the marks of her bare feet. She had taken it out of Christophe's room, and that very minute, she suddenly remembered that she had forgotten to take it back again; she had left it in her own room, where Bäbi's sharp eyes had seen it at once. The two gossips had immediately put two and two together. Anna did not flinch. Bäbi followed her mistress's eyes, gave an exaggerated smile, and explained:

"The broom was broken: I gave it to Sami to mend."

Anna did not take the trouble to point out the gross falsehood of the excuse: she did not seem even to hear it: she looked at Bäbi's work, made a few remarks, and went out again impassively. But when the door was closed she lost all her pride: she could not help hiding behind the corner of the passage and listening—(she was humiliated to the very depths of her being at having to stoop to such means: but fear mastered her).—She heard a dry chuckle of laughter. Then whispering, so low that she could not make out what was said. But in her desperation Anna thought she heard: her terror breathed into her ears the words she was afraid of hearing: she imagined that they were speaking of the coming masquerades and a charivari. There was no doubt: they would try to introduce the episode of the ashes.

On the evening of the same day—(it was the Wednesday preceding the carnival)—Braun was called away to a consultation twenty miles out of the town: he would not return until the next morning. Anna did not come down to dinner and staved in her room. She had chosen that night to carry out the tacit pledge she had made with herself. But she had

decided to carry it out alone, and to say nothing to Christophe. She despised him. She thought:

"He promised. But he is a man, he is an egoist and a liar. He has his art. He will soon forget."

And then perhaps there was in her passionate heart that seemed so inaccessible to kindness, room for a feeling of pity for her companion. But she was too harsh and too passionate to admit it to herself.

Bäbi told Christophe that her mistress had bade her to make her excuses as she was not very well and wished to rest. Christophe dined alone under Bäbi's supervision, and she bored him with her chatter, tried to make him talk, and protested such an extraordinary devotion to Anna, that, in spite of his readiness to believe in the good faith of men, Christophe became suspicious. He was counting on having a decisive interview with Anna that night. He could no more postpone matters than she. He had not forgotten the pledge they had given each other at the dawn of that sad day. He was ready to keep it if Anna demanded it of him. But he saw the absurdity of their dying together, how it would not solve the problem, and how the sorrow of it and the scandal must fall upon Braun's shoulders. He was inclined to think that the best thing to do was to tear themselves apart and for him to try once more to go right away, —to see at least if he were strong enough to stay away from her: he doubted it after the vain attempt he had made before: but he thought that, in case he could not bear it, he would still have time to turn to the last resort, alone, without anybody knowing.

He hoped that after supper he would be able to escape for a moment to go up to Anna's room. But Bäbi dogged him. As a rule she used to finish her work early: but that night she seemed never to have done with scrubbing her kitchen: and when Christophe thought he was rid of her, she took it into her head to tidy a cupboard in the passage leading to Anna's room. Christophe found her standing on a stool, and he saw that she had no intention of moving all evening. He felt a furious desire to knock her over with her piles of plates: but he restrained himself and asked her

to go and see how her mistress was and if he could say good-night to her. Bäbi went, returned, and said, as she watched him with a malicious joy, that Madame was better and was asleep and did not want anybody to disturb her. Christophe tried irritably and nervously to read, but could not, and went up to his room. Bäbi watched his light until it was put out, and then went upstairs to her room, resolving to keep watch: she carefully left her door open so that she could hear every sound in the house. Unfortunately for her, she could not go to bed without at once falling asleep and sleeping so soundly that not thunder, not even her own curiosity, could wake her up before daybreak. Her sound sleep was no secret. The echo of it resounded through the house even to the lower floor.

As soon as Christophe heard the familiar noise he went to Anna's room. It was imperative that he should speak to her. He was profoundly uneasy. He reached her door, turned the handle: the door was locked. He knocked lightly: no reply. He placed his lips to the keyhole and begged her in a whisper, then more loudly, to open: not a movement, not a sound. Although he told himself that Anna was asleep, he was in agonies. And as, in a vain attempt to hear, he laid his cheek against the door, a smell came to his nostrils which seemed to be issuing from the room: he bent down and recognized it: it was the smell of gas. His blood froze. He shook the door, never thinking that he might wake Bäbi: the door did not give. . . . He understood: in her dressing-room, which led out of her room, Anna had a little gas-stove: she had turned it on. He must break open the door: but in his anxiety Christophe kept his senses enough to remember that at all costs Bäbi must not hear. He leaned against one of the leaves of the door and gave an enormous shove as quietly as he could. The solid, well-fitting door creaked on its hinges, but did not yield. There was another door which led from Anna's room to Braun's dressing-room. He ran to it. That too was locked: but the lock was outside. He started to tug it off. It was not easy. He had to remove the four big screws which were buried deep in the wood. He had only his knife and he

could not see: for he dared not light a candle; it would have meant blowing the whole place up. Fumblingly he managed to fit his knife into the head of a screw, then another, breaking the blades and cutting himself; the screws seemed to be interminably long, and he thought he would never be able to get them out: and, at the same time, in the feverish haste which was making his body break out into a cold sweat, there came to his mind a memory of his childhood: he saw himself, a boy of ten, shut up in a dark room as a punishment: he had taken off the lock and run out of the house. . . . The last screw came out. The lock gave with a crackling noise like the sawing of wood. Christophe plunged into the room, rushed to the window, and opened it. A flood of cold air swept in. Christophe bumped into the furniture in the dark and came to the bed, groped with his hands, and came on Anna's body, tremblingly felt her legs lying still under the clothes, and moved his hands up to her waist: Anna was sitting up in bed, trembling. She had not had time to feel the first effects of asphyxiation: the room was high: the air came through the chinks in the windows and the doors. Christophe caught her in his arms. She broke away from him angrily, crying:

"Go away! . . . Ah! What have you done?"

She raised her hands to strike him: but she was worn out with emotion: she fell back on her pillow and sobbed:

"Oh! Oh! We've to go through it all over again!"

Christophe took her hands in his, kissed her, scolded her, spoke to her tenderly and roughly:

"You were going to die, to die, alone, without me!"

"Oh! You!" she said bitterly.

Her tone was as much as to say:

"You want to live."

He spoke harshly to her and tried to break down her will.

"You are mad!" he said. "You might have blown the house to pieces!"

"I wanted to," she said angrily.

He tried to play on her religious fears: that was the right

note. As soon as he touched on it she began to scream and to beg him to stop. He went on pitilessly, thinking that it was the only means of bringing her back to the desire to live. She said nothing more, but lay sobbing convulsively. When he had done, she said in a tone of intense hatred:

"Are you satisfied now? You've done your work well. You've brought me to despair. And now, what am I to do?"

"Live," he said.

"Live!" she cried. "You don't know how impossible it is! You know nothing! You know nothing!"

He asked:

"What is it?"

She shrugged her shoulders:

"Listen."

In a few brief disconnected sentences she told him all that she had concealed from him: Bābi's spying on her, the ashes, the scene with Sami, the carnival, the public insult that was before her. As she told her story she was unable to distinguish between the figments of her fear and what she had any reason to fear. He listened in utter consternation, and was no more capable than she of discerning between the real and the imaginary in her story. Nothing had ever been farther from his mind than to suspect how they were being dogged. He tried to understand: he could find nothing to say: against such enemies he was disarmed. Only he was conscious of a blind fury, a desire to strike and to destroy. He said:

"Why didn't you dismiss Bābi?"

She did not deign to reply. Bābi dismissed would have been even more venomous than Bābi tolerated: and Christophe saw the idiocy of his question. His thoughts were in a whirl: he was trying to discover a way out, some immediate action upon which to engage. He clenched his fists and cried:

"I'll kill them?"

"Who?" she said, despising him for his futile words.

He lost all power of thought or action. He felt that he was lost in such a network of obscure treachery, in which

it was impossible to clutch at anything since all were parties to it. He writhed.

"Cowards!" he cried, in sheer despair.

When Braun returned next morning he found Anna in a prostrate condition. He saw that something extraordinary had happened: but he could glean nothing either from Bäbi or Christophe. All day long Anna did not stir: she did not open her eyes: her pulse was so weak that he could hardly feel it: every now and then it would stop, and, for a moment, Braun would be in a state of agony, thinking that her heart had stopped. His affection made him doubt his own knowledge: he ran and fetched a colleague. The two men examined Anna and could not make up their minds whether it was the beginning of a fever, or a case of nervous hysteria: they had to keep the patient under observation. Braun never left Anna's bedside. He refused to eat. Towards evening Anna's pulse gave no signs of fever, but was extremely weak. Braun tried to force a few spoonfuls of milk between her lips: she brought it back at once. Her body lay limp in her husband's arms like a broken doll. Braun spent the night with her, getting up every moment to listen to her breathing. Bäbi, who was hardly at all put out by Anna's illness, played the devoted servant and refused to go to bed and sat up with Braun.

On the Friday Anna opened her eyes. Braun spoke to her: she took no notice of him. She lay quite still with her eyes staring at a mark on the wall. About midday Braun saw great tears trickling down her thin cheeks: he dried them gently: one by one the tears went on trickling down. Once more Braun tried to make her take some food. She took it passively. In the evening she began to talk: loose snatches of sentences. She talked about the Rhine: she had tried to drown herself, but there was not enough water. In her dreams she persisted in attempting suicide, imagining all sorts of strange forms of death; always death was at the back of her thoughts. Sometimes she was arguing with some one, and then her face would take on an expression of fear and anger: she addressed herself to God, and tried

obstinately to prove that it was all His fault. Or the flame of desire would kindle in her eyes, and she would say shameless things which it seemed impossible that she should know. Once she saw Băbi, and gave precise orders for the morrow's washing. At night she dozed. Suddenly she got up: Braun ran to her. She looked at him strangely, and babbled impatient, formless words. He asked her:

"My dear Anna, what do you want?"

She said harshly:

"Go and bring him."

"Who?" he asked.

She looked at him once more with the same expression and suddenly burst out laughing: then she drew her hands over her forehead and moaned:

"Oh! my God! Let me forget! . . ."

Sleep overcame her. She was at peace until day. About dawn she moved a little: Braun raised her head to give her to drink: she gulped down a few mouthfuls, and, stooping to Braun's hands, she kissed them. Once more she dozed off.

On the Saturday morning she woke up about nine o'clock. Without saying a word, she began to slip out of bed. Braun went quickly to her and tried to make her lie down again. She insisted. He asked her what she wanted to do. She replied:

"Go to church."

He tried to argue with her and to remind her that it was not Sunday and the church was closed. She relapsed into silence: but she sat in a chair near the bed, and began to put on her clothes with trembling fingers. Braun's doctor-friend came in. He joined Braun in his entreaties: then, seeing that she would not give in, he examined her, and finally consented. He took Braun aside, and told him that his wife's illness seemed to be altogether moral, and that for the time being he must avoid opposing her wishes, and that he could see no danger in her going out, so long as Braun went with her. Braun told Anna that he would go with her. She refused, and insisted on going alone. But she stumbled as soon as she tried to walk across the room.

Then, without a word, she took Braun's arm, and they went out. She was very weak, and kept stopping. Several times he asked her if she wanted to go home. She began to walk on. When they reached the church, as he had told her, they found the doors closed. Anna sat down on a bench near the door, and stayed, shivering, until the clock struck twelve. Then she took Braun's arm again, and they came home in silence. But in the evening she wanted to go to church again. Braun's entreaties were useless. He had to go out with her once more.

Christophe had spent the two days alone. Braun was too anxious to think about him. Only once, on the Saturday morning, when he was trying to divert Anna's mind from her fixed idea of going out, he had asked her if she would like to see Christophe. She had looked at him with such an expression of fear and loathing that he could not but remark it: and he never pronounced Christophe's name again.

Christophe had shut himself up in his room. Anxiety, love, remorse, a very chaos of sorrow was whirling in him. He blamed himself for everything. He was overwhelmed by self-disgust. More than once he had got up to go and confess the whole story to Braun—and each time he had immediately been arrested by the thought of bringing wretchedness to yet another human being by his self-accusation. At the same time he was spared nothing of his passion. He prowled about in the passage outside Anna's room; and when he heard footsteps inside coming to the door he rushed away to his own room.

When Braun and Anna went out in the afternoon, he looked out for them from behind his window-curtains. He saw Anna. She who had been so erect and proud walked now with bowed back, lowered head, yellow complexion: she was an old woman bending under the weight of the cloak and shawl her husband had thrown about her: she was ugly. But Christophe did not see her ugliness: he saw only her misery; and his heart ached with pity and love. He longed to run to her, to prostrate himself in the mud, to kiss her feet: her dear body so broken and destroyed

by passion, and to implore her forgiveness. And he thought as he looked after her:

"My work. . . . That is what I have done!"

But when he looked into the mirror and saw his own face, he was shown the same devastation in his eyes, in all his features: he saw the marks of death upon himself, as upon her, and he thought:

"My work? No. It is the work of the cruel Master who drives us mad and destroys us."

The house was empty. Bäbi had gone out to tell the neighbors of the day's events. Time was passing. The clock struck five. Christophe was filled with terror as he thought of Anna's return and the coming of the night. He felt that he could not bear to stay under the same roof with her for another night. He felt his reason breaking beneath the weight of passion. He did not know what to do, he did not know what he wanted, except that he wanted Anna at all costs. He thought of the wretched face he had just seen going past his window, and he said to himself:

"I must save her from myself! . . ."

His will stirred into life.

He gathered together the litter of papers on the table, tied them up, took his hat and cloak, and went out. In the passage, near the door of Anna's room, he hurried forward in a spasm of fear. Downstairs he glanced for the last time into the empty garden. He crept away like a thief in the night. An icy mist pricked his face and hands. Christophe skirted the walls of the houses, dreading a meeting with any one he knew. He went to the station, and got into a train which was just starting for Lucerne. At the first stopping-place he wrote to Braun. He said that he had been called away from the town on urgent business for a few days, and that he was very sorry to have to leave him at such a time: he begged him to send him news, and gave him an address. At Lucerne he took the St. Gothard train. Late at night he got out at a little station between Altorf and Goeschenen. He did not know the name, never knew it. He went into the nearest inn by the station. The road was filled with pools of water. It was raining in tor-

rents: it rained all night and all next day. The water was rushing and roaring like a cataract from a broken gutter. Sky and earth were drowned, seemingly dissolved and melted like his own mind. He went to bed between damp sheets which smelt of railway smoke. He could not lie still. The idea of the danger hanging over Anna was too much in his mind for him to feel his own suffering as yet. Somehow he must avert public malignity from her, somehow turn it aside upon another track. In his feverish condition a queer idea came to him: he decided to write to one of the few musicians with whom he had been acquainted in the little town, Krebs, the confectioner-organist. He gave him to understand that he was off to Italy upon an affair of the heart, that he had been possessed by the passion when he first took up his abode with the Brauns, and that he had tried to shake free of it, but it had been too strong for him. He put the whole thing clearly enough for Krebs to understand, and yet so veiled as to enable him to improve on it as he liked. Christophe implored Krebs to keep his secret. He knew that the good little man simply could not keep anything to himself, and—quite rightly—he reckoned on Krebs hastening to spread the news as soon as it came into his hands. To make sure of hoodwinking the gossips of the town Christophe closed his letter with a few cold remarks about Braun and about Anna's illness.

The next day he went and buried himself in a mountain village, hidden from the world by driving blizzards.—There he would bury his heart, stupefy his thoughts, and forget, and forget! . . .

III

He had taken refuge in a lonely farm in the Swiss Jura Mountains. The house was built in the woods tucked away in the folds of a high humpy plateau. It was protected from the north winds by crags and boulders. In front of it lay a wide stretch of fields, and long wooded slopes: the rock suddenly came to an end in a sheer precipice: twisted

pinces hung on the edge of it; behind were wide-spreading beeches. The sky was blotted out. There was no sign of life. A wide stretch of country with all its lines erased. The whole place lay sleeping under the snow. Only at night in the forest foxes barked. It was the end of the winter. Slow dragging winter. Interminable winter. When it seemed like to break up, snow would fall once more, and it would begin again.

However, for a week now the old slumbering earth had felt its heart slow beating to new birth. The first deceptive breath of spring crept into the air and beneath the frozen crust. From the branches of the beech-trees, stretched out like soaring wings, the snow melted. Already through the white cloak of the fields there peered a few thin blades of grass of tender green: around their sharp needles, through the gaps in the snow, like so many little mouths, the dank black earth was breathing. For a few hours every day the voice of the waters, sleeping beneath their robe of ice, murmured. In the skeleton woods a few birds piped their shrill clear song.

Christophe noticed nothing. All things were the same to him. He paced up and down, up and down his room. Or he would walk outside. He could not keep still. His soul was torn in pieces by inward demons. They fell upon and rent each other. His suppressed passion never left off beating furiously against the walls of the house of its captivity. His disgust with passion was no less furiously in revolt: passion and disgust flew at each other's throats, and, in their conflict, they lacerated his heart. And at the same time he was delivered up to the memory of Olivier, despair at his death, the hunger to create which nothing could satisfy, and pride rearing on the edge of the abyss of nothingness. He was a prey to all devils. He had no moment of respite. Or, if there came a seeming calm, if the rushing waves did fall back for a moment, it was only that he might find himself alone, and nothing in himself: thought, love, will, all had been done to death.

To create! That was the only loophole. To abandon the wreck of his life to the mercy of the waves! To save him-

self by swimming in the dreams of art! . . . To create! He tried. . . . He could not.

Christophe had no reason for living left: and he went on living. He had no motive for struggling; and he struggled, body to body, foot to foot, with the invisible enemy who was bending his back. He was like Jacob with the angel. He expected nothing from the fight, he expected nothing now but the end, rest; and he went on fighting. And he cried aloud:

"Break me and have done! Why dost thou not throw me down?"

Night. He had dozed off. In the silence a distant storm arose, like a hurricane, the *fæhn* of the spring, and its burning breath warming the still sleeping, chilly earth, the *fæhn* which melts the ice and gathers fruitful rains. It rumbled like thunder in the forests on the other side of the ravine. It came nearer, swelled, charged up the slopes: the whole mountain roared. In the stable a horse neighed and the cows lowed. Christophe's hair stood on end, he sat up in bed and listened. The squall came up screaming, set the shutters banging, the weather-cocks squeaking, made the slates of the roof go crashing down, and the whole house shake. A flower-pot fell and was smashed. Christophe's window was insecurely fastened, and was burst open with a bang, and the warm wind rushed in. Christophe received its blast full in his face and on his naked chest. He jumped out of bed gaping, gasping, choking. It was as though the living God were rushing into his empty soul. The Resurrection! . . . The air poured down his throat, the flood of new life swelled through him and penetrated to his very marrow. He felt like to burst, he wanted to shout, to shout for joy and sorrow: and there would only come inarticulate sounds from his mouth. He reeled, he beat on the walls with his arms, while all around him were sheets of paper flying on the wind. He fell down in the middle of the room and cried:

"O Thou, Thou! Thou art come back to me at last!"

"Thou art come back to me, Thou art come back to

me! O Thou, whom I had lost! . . . Why didst Thou abandon me?"

"To fulfil My task, that thou didst abandon."

"What task?"

"My fight."

"What need hast Thou to fight? Art Thou not master of all?"

"I am not the master."

"Art Thou not All that Is?"

"I am not all that is. I am Life fighting Nothingness. I am not Nothingness, I am the Fire which burns in the Night. I am not the Night. I am the eternal Light; I am not an eternal destiny soaring above the fight. I am free Will which struggles eternally. Struggle and burn with Me."

"I am conquered. I am good for nothing."

"Thou art conquered? All seems lost to thee? Others will be conquerors. Think not of thyself, think of My army."

"I am alone. I have none but myself. I belong to no army."

"Thou art not alone, and thou dost not belong to thyself. Thou art one of My voices, thou art one of My arms. Speak and strike for Me. But if the arm be broken, or the voice be weary, then still I hold My ground: I fight with other voices, other arms than thine. Though thou art conquered, yet art thou of the army which is never vanquished. Remember that and thou wilt fight even unto death."

"Lord, I have suffered much!"

"Thinkest thou that I do not suffer also? For ages death has hunted Me and nothingness has lain in wait for Me. It is only by victory in the fight that I can make My way. The river of life is red with My blood."

"Fighting, always fighting?"

"We must always fight. God is a fighter, even He Himself. God is a conqueror. He is a devouring lion. Nothingness hems Him in and He hurls it down. And the rhythm of the fight is the supreme harmony. Such harmony is not for thy mortal ears. It is enough for thee to know that it exists. Do thy duty in peace and leave the rest to the Gods."

"I have no strength left."

"Sing for those who are strong."

"My voice is gone."

"Pray."

"My heart is foul."

"Pluck it out. Take Mine."

"Lord, it is easy to forget myself, to cast away my dead soul. But how can I cast out the dead? how can I forget those whom I have loved?"

"Abandon the dead with thy dead soul. Thou wilt find them alive with My living soul."

"Thou hast left me once: wilt Thou leave me again?"

"I shall leave thee again. Never doubt that. It is for thee never to leave Me more."

"But if the flame of my life dies down?"

"Then do thou kindle others."

"And if death is in me?"

"Life is elsewhere. Go, open thy gates to life. Thou insensate man, to shut thyself up in thy ruined house! Quit thyself. There are other mansions."

"O Life, O Life! I see . . . I sought thee in myself, in my own empty shut-in soul. My soul is broken: the sweet air pours in through the windows of my wounds: I breathe again. I have found Thee once more, O Life! . . ."

"I have found thee again. . . . Hold thy peace, and listen."

And like the murmuring of a spring Christophe heard the song of life bubbling up in him. Leaning out of his window, he saw the forest, which yesterday had been dead, seething with life under the sun and the wind, heaving like the Ocean. Along the stems of the trees, like thrills of joy, the waves of the wind passed: and the yielding branches held their arms in ecstasy up to the brilliant sky. And the torrent rang out merrily as a bell. The countryside had risen from the grave in which yesterday it had been entombed: life had entered it at the time when love passed into Christophe's heart. Oh! the miracle of the soul touched by grace, awaking to new life! Then everything comes to life again all round it. The heart begins

to beat once more. The eye of the spirit is opened. The dried-up fountains begin once more to flow.

And Christophe, being delivered up to art, was amazed to find unknown and unsuspected powers teeming in himself: powers quite apart from his passions, his sorrows, his conscious soul, a stranger soul, indifferent to all his loves and sufferings, to all his life, a joyous, fantastic, wild, incomprehensible soul. It rode him and dug its spurs into his sides. And, in the rare moments when he could stop to take breath, he wondered as he read over what he had written:

"How could such things have come out of me?"

He was a prey to that delirium of the mind which is known to every man of genius, that will which is independent of the will, "*the ineffable enigma of the world and life*," which Goethe calls "*the demoniac*," against which he was always armed, though it always overcame him.

And Christophe wrote and wrote. For days and weeks. There are times when the mind, being impregnated, can feed upon itself and go on producing almost indefinitely. The faintest contact with things, the pollen of a flower borne by the wind were enough to make the inward germs, the myriads of germs put forth and come to blossom. Christophe had no time to think, no time to live. His creative soul reigned sovereign over the ruins of his life.

And suddenly it stopped. Christophe came out of that state broken, scorched, older by ten years—but saved. He had left Christophe and gone over to God.

Streaks of white hair had suddenly appeared in his black mane, like those autumn flowers which spring up in the fields in September nights. There were fresh lines on his cheeks. But his eyes had regained their calm expression, and his mouth bore the marks of resignation. He was appeased. He understood now. He understood the vanity of his pride, the vanity of human pride, under the terrible hand of the Force which moves the worlds. No man is surely master of himself. A man must watch. For if he slumbers that Force rushes into him and whirls him headlong . . . into what dread abysses? or the torrent which bears him along sinks

and leaves him on its dry bed. To fight the fight it is not enough to will. A man must humiliate himself before the unknown God, who *flat ubi vult*, who blows where and when He listeth, love, death, or life. Human will can do nothing without God's. One second is enough for Him to obliterate the work of years of toil and effort. And, if it so please Him, He can cause the eternal to spring forth from dust and mud. No man more than the creative artist feels at the mercy of God: for, if he is truly great, he will only say what the Spirit bids him.

And Christophe understood the wisdom of old Haydn who went down on his knees each morning before he took pen in hand. . . . *Vigila et ora*. Watch and pray. Pray to God that He may be with you. Keep in loving and pious communion with the Spirit of life.

Towards the end of summer a Parisian friend of Christophe's, who was passing through Switzerland, discovered his retreat. He was a musical critic who in old days had been an excellent judge of his compositions. He was accompanied by a well-known painter, who was avowedly a whole-hearted admirer of Christophe's. They told him of the very considerable success of his work, which was being played all over Europe. Christophe showed very little interest in the news: the past was dead to him, and his old compositions did not count. At his visitors' request he showed them the music he had written recently. The critic could make nothing of it. He thought Christophe had gone mad.

"No melody, no measure, no thematic workmanship: a sort of liquid core, molten matter which had not hardened, taking any shape, but possessing none of its own: it is like nothing on earth: a glimmering of light in chaos."

Christophe smiled:

"It is quite like that," he said. "The eyes of chaos shining through the veil of order. . . ."

But the critic did not understand Novalis' words:

("He is cleaned out," he thought.)

Christophe did not try to make him understand.

THE NEW DAWN

I

Christophe loses count of the fleeting years. Drop by drop life ebbs away. But *his* life is elsewhere. It has no history. His history lies wholly in his creative work. The unceasing buzzing song of music fills his soul, and makes him insensible to the outward tumult.

Christophe has conquered. His name has been forced upon the world. He is ageing. His hair is white. That is nothing to him, his heart is ever young: he has surrendered none of his force, none of his faith. Once more he is calm, but not as he was before he passed by the Burning Bush. In the depths of his soul there is still the quivering of the storm, the memory of his glimpse into the abyss of the raging seas. He knows that no man may boast of being master of himself without the permission of the God of battle. In his soul there are two souls. One is a high plateau swept by winds and shrouded with clouds. The other, higher still, is a snowy peak bathed in light. There it is impossible to dwell; but, when he is frozen by the mists on the lower ground, well he knows the path that leads to the sun. In his misty soul Christophe is not alone. Near him he ever feels the presence of an invisible friend, the sturdy Saint Cecilia, listening with wide, calm eyes to the heavens; and, like the Apostle Paul,—in Raphael's picture,—silent and dreaming, leaning on his sword, he is beyond exasperation, and has no thought of fighting: he dreams, and forges his dreams into form.

During this period of his life he mostly wrote piano and chamber music. In such work he was more free to dare

and be bold: it necessitated fewer intermediaries between his ideas and their realization; his ideas were less in danger of losing force in the course of their percolation. Frescobaldi, Couperin, Schubert, and Chopin, in their boldness of expression and style, anticipated the revolutionaries in orchestral music by fifty years. Out of the crude stuff shaped by Christophe's strong hands came strange and unknown agglomerations of harmony, bewildering combinations of chords, begotten of the remotest kinships of sounds accessible to the senses in these days; they cast a magical and holy spell upon the mind.—But the public must have time to grow accustomed to the conquests and the trophies which a great artist brings back with him from his quest in the deep waters of the ocean. Very few would follow Christophe in the temerity of his later works. His fame was due to his earlier compositions. The feeling of not being understood, which is even more painful in success than in the lack of it, because there seems to be no way out of it, had, since the death of his only friend, aggravated in Christophe his rather morbid tendency to seek isolation from the world.

However, the gates of Germany were open to him once more. In France the tragic brawl had been forgotten. He was free to go whithersoever he pleased. But he was afraid of the memories that would lie in wait for him in Paris. And, although he had spent a few months in Germany and returned there from time to time to conduct performances of his work, he did not settle there. He found too many things which hurt him. They were not particular to Germany: he found them elsewhere. But a man expects more of his own country than any other, and he suffers more from its foibles.

An evening in summer.

He was walking in the mountains above a village in Switzerland. He was striding along with his hat in his hand, up a winding road. He came to a neck where the road took a double turn, and passed into shadow between two slopes; on either side were nut-trees and pines. It was like a little

shut-in world. On either hand the road seemed to come to an end, cut off at the edge of the void. Beyond were blue distance and the gleaming air. The peace of evening came down like a gentle rain.

They came together each at the same moment turning the bend at either end of the neck. She was dressed in black, and stood out against the clear sky: behind her were two children, a boy and a girl, between six and eight, who were playing and picking flowers. They recognized each other at a distance of a few yards. Their emotion was visible in their eyes; but neither brought it into words; each gave only an imperceptible movement. He was deeply moved: she . . . her lips trembled a little. They stopped. Almost in a whisper:

"Grazia!"

"You here!"

They held out their hands and stood without a word. Grazia was the first to make an effort to break the silence. She told him where she lived, and asked him where he was staying. Question and answer were mechanical, and they hardly listened, heard later, when their hands had parted: they were absorbed in gazing at each other. The children came back to her. She introduced them. He felt hostile towards them, and looked at them with no kindness, and said nothing: he was engrossed with her, occupied only in studying her beautiful face that bore some marks of suffering and age. She was embarrassed by his gaze, and said:

"Will you come, this evening?"

And she gave the name of her hotel.

He asked her where her husband was. She pointed to her black dress. He was too much moved to say more, and left her awkwardly. But when he had taken a few strides he came back to the children, who were picking strawberries, and took them roughly in his arms and kissed them, and went away.

In the evening he went to the hotel, and found her on the veranda, with the blinds drawn. They sat apart. There were very few people about, only two or three old people.

Christophe was irritated by their presence. Grazia looked at him, and he looked at her, and murmured her name over and over again.

"Don't you think I have changed?" she asked.

His heart grew big.

"You have suffered," he said.

"You too," she answered pityingly, scanning the deep marks of agony and passion in his face.

They were at a loss for words.

"Please," he said, a moment later, "let us go somewhere else. Could we not find somewhere to be alone and talk?"

"No, my dear. Let us stay here. It is good enough here. No one is heeding us at all."

"I cannot talk freely here."

"That is all the better."

He could not understand why. Later, when in memory he went over their conversation, he thought she had not trusted him. But she was instinctively afraid of emotional scenes: unconsciously she was seeking protection from any surprise of their hearts: the very awkwardness of their intimacy in a public room, so sheltering the modesty of her secret emotions, was dear to her.

In whispers, with long intervals of silence, they sketched their lives in outline. Count Berény had been killed in a duel a few months ago; and Christophe saw that she had not been very happy with him. Also, she had lost a child, her first-born. She made no complaint, and turned the conversation from herself to question Christophe, and, as he told her of his tribulations, she showed the most affectionate compassion. Bells rang. It was Sunday evening. Life stood still.

She asked him to come again next day but one. He was hurt that she should be so little eager to see him again. In his heart happiness and sorrow were mingled.

Next day, on some pretext, she wrote and asked him to come. He was delighted with her little note. This time she received him in her private room. She was with her two children. He looked at them, still a little uneasily, but very tenderly. He thought the little girl—the elder of the two—

very like her mother: but he did not try to match the boy's looks. They talked about the country, the times, the books lying open on the table:—but their eyes spoke of other things. He was hoping to be able to talk more intimately when a hotel acquaintance came in. He marked the pleasure and politeness with which Grazia received the stranger: she seemed to make no difference between her two visitors. He was hurt by it, but could not be angry with her. She proposed that they should all go for a walk and he accepted; the presence of the other woman, though she was young and charming, paralyzed him: his day was spoiled.

He did not see Grazia again for two days. During that time he lived but for the hours he was to spend with her.—Once more his efforts to speak to her were doomed to failure. While she was very gentle and kind with him, she could not throw off her reserve. All unconsciously Christophe added to her difficulty by his outbursts of German sentimentality, which embarrassed her and forced her instinct into reaction.

He wrote her a letter which touched her, saying that life was so short! Their lives were already so far gone! Perhaps they would have only a very little time in which to see each other, and it was pitiful, almost criminal, not to employ it in frank converse.

She replied with a few affectionate words, begging him to excuse her for her distrust, which she could not avoid, since she had been so much hurt by life: she could not break her habitual reserve: any excessive display, even of a genuine feeling, hurt and terrified her. But well she knew the worth of the friendship that had come to her once more: and she was as glad of it as he. She asked him to dine with her that evening.

His heart was brimming with gratitude. In his room, lying on his bed, he sobbed. It was the opening of the flood-gates of ten years of solitude: for, since Olivier's death, he had been utterly alone. Her letter gave the word of resurrection to his heart that was so famished for tenderness. Tenderness! . . . He thought he had put it from him: he had been forced to learn how to do without it! Now he

felt how sorely he needed it, and the great stores of love that had accumulated in him. . . .

It was a sweet and blessed evening that they spent together. . . . He could only speak to her of trivial subjects, in spite of their intention to hide nothing from each other. But what goodly things he told her through the piano, which with her eyes she invited him to use to tell her what he had to say! She was struck by the humility of the man whom she had known in his violence and pride. When he went away the silent pressure of their hands told them that they had found each other, and would never lose what they had regained.—It was raining, and there was not a breath of wind. His heart was singing.

She was only able to stay a few days longer, and she did not postpone her departure for an hour. He dared not ask her to do so, nor complain. On their last day they went for a walk with the children; there came a moment when he was so full of love and happiness that he tried to tell her so: but, with a very gentle gesture, she stopped him and smiled:

“Hush! I feel everything that you could say.”

They sat down at the turn of the road where they had met. Still smiling she looked down into the valley below: but it was not the valley that she saw. He looked at the gentle face marked with the traces of bitter suffering: a few white tresses showed in her thick black hair. He was filled with a pitying, passionate adoration of this beloved creature who had travailed and been impregnated with the suffering of the soul. In every one of the marks of time upon her the soul was visible.—And, in a low, trembling voice, he craved, as a precious favor, which she granted him, a white hair from her head.

She went away. He could not understand why she would not have him accompany her. He had no doubt of her feeling for him, but her reserve disconcerted him. He could not stay alone in that place, and set out in another direction. He tried to occupy his mind with traveling and work. He wrote to Grazia. She answered him, two or three weeks

later, with very brief letters, in which she showed her tranquil friendship, knowing neither impatience nor uneasiness. They hurt him and he loved them. He would not admit that he had any right to reproach her: their affection was too recent, too recently renewed. He was fearful of losing it. And yet every letter he had from her breathed a calm loyalty which should have made him feel secure. But she was so different from him! . . .

They had agreed to meet in Rome, towards the end of the autumn. As soon as he arrived he went to see Grazia. She asked him:

"How did you come? Did you stop at Milan or Florence?"

"No," he said. "Why should I?"

She laughed.

"That's a fine thing to say! And what do you think of Rome?"

"Nothing," he said. "I haven't seen it!"

"Not yet?"

"Nothing. Not a single monument. I came straight to you from my hotel."

"You don't need to go far to see Rome. . . . Look at that wall opposite. . . . You only need to see its light."

"I only see you," he said.

"You are a barbarian. You only see your own ideas. When did you leave Switzerland?"

"A week ago."

"What have you been doing since then?"

"I don't know. I stopped, by chance, at a place by the sea. I never noticed its name. I slept for a week. Slept, with my eyes open. I do not know what I have seen, or what I have dreamed. I think I was dreaming of you. I know that it was very beautiful. But the most lovely part of it all is that I forgot everything. . . ."

"Thank you!" she said.

(He did not listen.)

". . . Everything," he went on. "Everything that was then, everything that had been before. I am a new man. I am beginning to live again."

After long hesitation, over many weeks he asked her one day:

"Will you ever . . . ?"

"What is it?"

"Be mine."

He went on:

". . . and I yours."

She smiled:

"But you are mine, my dear."

"You know what I mean."

She was a little unhappy: but she took his hands and looked at him frankly:

"No, my dear," she said tenderly.

He could not speak. She saw that he was hurt.

"Forgive me. I have hurt you. I knew that you would say that to me. We must speak out frankly and in all truth, like good friends."

"Friends," he said sadly. "Nothing more?"

"You are ungrateful. What more do you want? To marry me? . . . Do you remember the old days when you had eyes only for my pretty cousin? I was sad then because you would not understand what I felt for you. Our whole lives might have been changed. Now I think it was better as it has been; it is better that we should never expose our friendship to the test of common life, the daily life, in which even the purest must be debased. . . ."

"You say that because you love me less."

"Oh no! I love you just the same."

"Ah! That is the first time you have told me."

"There must be nothing hidden from us now. You see, I have not much faith in marriage left. Mine, I know, was not a very good example. But I have thought and looked about me. Happy marriages are very rare. It is a little against nature. You cannot bind together the wills of two people without mutilating one of them, if not both, and it does not even bring the suffering through which it is well and profitable for the soul to pass."

"Ah!" he said. "But I can see in it a fine thing—the union of two sacrifices, two souls merged into one."

"A fine thing, in your dreams. In reality you would suffer more than any one."

"What! You think I could never have a wife, a family, children? . . . Don't say that! I should love them so! You think it impossible for me to have that happiness?"

"I don't know. I don't think so. Perhaps with a good woman, not very intelligent, not very beautiful, who would be devoted to you, and would not understand you."

"How unkind of you! . . . But you are wrong to make fun of it. A good woman is a fine thing, even if she has no mind."

"I agree. Shall I find you one?"

"Please! No. You are hurting me. How can you talk like that?"

"What have I said?"

"You don't love me at all, not at all. You can't if you can think of my marrying another woman."

"On the contrary, it is because I love you that I should be happy to do anything which could make you happy."

"Then, if that is true . . ."

"No, no. Don't go back to that. I tell you, it would make you miserable."

"Don't worry about me. I swear to you that I shall be happy! Speak the truth: do you think that you would be unhappy with me?"

"Oh! Unhappy? No, my dear. I respect and admire you too much ever to be unhappy with you. . . . But, I will tell you: I don't think anything could make me very unhappy now. I have seen too much. I have become philosophical. . . . But, frankly—(You want me to? You won't be angry?)—well. I know my own weakness. I should, perhaps, be foolish enough, after a few months, not to be perfectly happy with you; and I will not have that, just because my affection for you is the most holy thing in the world, and I will not have it tarnished."

Sadly, he said:

"Yes, you say that, to sweeten the pill. You don't like me. There are things in me which are odious to you."

"No, no. I assure you. Don't look so hang-dog. You are the dearest, kindest man. . . ."

"Then I don't understand. Why couldn't we agree?"

"Because we are too different—both too decided, too individual."

"That is why I love you."

"I too. But that is why we should find ourselves conflicting."

"No."

"Yes. Or, rather, as I know that you are bigger than I, I should reproach myself with embarrassing you with my smaller personality, and then I should be stifled. I should say nothing, and I should suffer."

Tears came to Christophe's eyes.

"Oh! I won't have that. Never! I would rather be utterly miserable than have you suffering though my fault, for my sake."

"My dear, you mustn't feel it like that. . . . You know I say all that, but I may be flattering myself. . . . Perhaps I should not be so good as to sacrifice myself for you."

"All the better."

"But, then, I should sacrifice you, and that would be misery for me. . . . You see, there is no solving the difficulty either way. Let us stay as we are. Could there be anything better than our friendship?"

He nodded his head and smiled a little bitterly.

"Yes. That is all very well. But at bottom you don't love me enough."

She smiled too, gently, with a little melancholy, and said, with a sigh:

"Perhaps. You are right. I am no longer young. I am tired. Life wears one out unless one is very strong, like you. . . . Oh! you, there are times when I look at you and you seem to be a boy of eighteen."

"Alas! With my old face, my wrinkles, my dull skin!"

"I know that you have suffered as much as I—perhaps more. I can see that. But sometimes you look at me with the eyes of a boy, and I feel you giving out a fresh stream of life. I am worn out. When I think of my old eagerness,

then—alas! As some one said, 'Those were great days. I was very unhappy!' I hold to life only by a thread. I should never be bold enough to try marriage again. Ah! Then! Then! . . . If you had only given a sign! . . ."

"Well, then, well, tell me . . ."

"No. It is not worth the trouble."

"Then, if in the old days, if I had . . ."

"Yes. If you had . . . ? I said nothing."

"I understood. You are cruel."

"Take it, then, that in the old days I was a fool."

"You are making it worse and worse."

"Poor Christophe! I can't say a word but it hurts you. I shan't say any more."

"You must. . . . Tell me. . . . Tell me something."

"Something?"

"Something kind."

She laughed.

"Don't laugh."

"Then you must not be sad."

"How can I be anything else?"

"You have no reason to be sad, I assure you."

"Why?"

"Because you have a friend who loves you."

"Truly?"

"If I tell you so, won't you believe me?"

"Tell me, then."

"You won't be sad any longer? You won't be insatiable? You will be content with our dear friendship?"

"I must."

"O! Ungrateful! And you say you love me? Really, I think I love you better than you love me."

"Ah! If it were possible."

He said that with such an outburst of lover's egoism that she laughed. He too. He insisted:

"Tell me! . . ."

For a moment she was silent, looking at him, then suddenly she brought her face close to Christophe's and kissed him. It was so unexpected! His heart leaped within him. He tried to take her in his arms. But she had escaped. At

the door of the little room she laid her finger on her lips.—“Hush!”—and disappeared.

From that moment on he did not again speak to her of his love, and he was less awkward in his relation with her.

II

During April he received an invitation from Paris to go there and conduct a series of concerts. He was sick at heart as he reached Paris. It was the first time he had been there since the death of Olivier. He had wished never to see the city again. In the cab which took him from the station to his hotel he hardly dared look out of the window; for the first few days he stayed in his room and could not bring himself to go out. He was fearful of the memories lying in wait for him outside. But what exactly did he dread? Did he really know? Was it, as he tried to believe, the terror of seeing the dead spring to life again exactly as they had been? Or was it—the greater sorrow of being forced to know that they were dead? . . . Against this renewal of grief all the half-unconscious ruses of instinct had taken up arms. It was for this reason—(though perhaps he knew it not)—that he had chosen a hotel in a district far removed from that in which he had lived. And when for the first time he went out into the streets, having to conduct rehearsals at the concert-hall, when once more he came in contact with the life of Paris, he walked for a long time with his eyes closed, refusing to see what he did see, insisting on seeing only what he had seen in old days. He kept on saying to himself:

“I know that. I know that. . . .”

In art as in politics there was the same intolerant anarchy. The same Fair in the market-place. Only the actors had changed their parts. The revolutionaries of his day had become bourgeois, and the supermen had become men of fashion. The old independents were trying to stifle the new independents. The young men of twenty years ago were now more conservative than the old conservatives whom they

had fought, and their critics refused the newcomers the right to live. Apparently nothing was different.

But everything had changed. . . .

He stayed because his artistic curiosity was reawakened, and was drawn on to contemplation of the renewal of art.

The longer he stayed in Paris the greater grew his interest in the new activity stirring in that gigantic ant-heap. He was the more interested in it all as in the young ants he found less sympathy with himself. He was not deceived: his success was a Pyrrhic victory. After an absence of ten years his return had created a sensation in Parisian society. But by an ironic turn of events, such as is by no means rare, he found himself patronized by his old enemies the snobs, and people of fashion: the artists were either mutely hostile or distrustful of him. He won his way by his name, which already belonged to the past, by his considerable accomplishment, by his tone of passionate conviction, and the violence of his sincerity. But if people were forced to reckon with him, to admire or respect him, they did not understand or love him. He was outside the art of the time. A monster, a living anachronism. He had always been that. His ten years of solitude had accentuated the contrast. During his absence in Europe, and especially in Paris, a great work of reconstruction had been carried through. A new order was springing to life. A generation was arising, desirous rather of action than of understanding, hungry rather for happiness than for truth. It wished to live, to grasp life, even at the cost of a lie.

One morning there came a knock on the door. He went to open it, cursing at being interrupted. A boy of fourteen or fifteen asked for M. Krafft. Christophe gruffly bade him come in. He was fair, with blue eyes, fine features, not very tall, with a slender, erect figure. He stood in front of Christophe, rather shyly, and said not a word. Quickly he pulled himself together, and raised his limpid eyes, and looked at him with keen interest. Christophe smiled as he scanned the boy's charming face, and the boy smiled too.

"Well?" said Christophe. "What do you want?"

"I came," said the boy. . . .

(And once more he became confused, blushed, and was silent.)

"I can see that you have come," said Christophe, laughing. "But why have you come? Look at me. Are you afraid of me?"

The boy smiled once more, shook his head, and said:

"No."

"Bravo! Then tell me who you are."

"I am . . ." said the boy.

He stopped once more. His eyes wandered curiously round the room, and lighted on a photograph of Olivier on the mantelpiece.

"Come!" said Christophe. "Courage!"

The boy said:

"I am his son."

Christophe started: he got up from his chair, took hold of the boy's arm, and drew him to him; he sank back into his chair and held him in a close embrace: their faces almost touched; and he gazed and gazed at him, saying:

"My boy. . . . My poor boy. . . ."

Suddenly he took his face in his hands and kissed his brow, eyes, cheeks, nose, hair. The boy was frightened and shocked by such a violent demonstration, and broke away from him. Christophe let him go. He hid his face in his hand, and leaned his brow against the wall, and sat so for the space of a few moments. The boy had withdrawn to the other end of the room. Christophe raised his head. His face was at rest: he looked at the boy with an affectionate smile.

"I frightened you," he said. "Forgive me. . . . You see, I loved him."

The boy was still frightened, and said nothing.

"How like you are to him!" said Christophe. . . . "And yet I should not have recognized you. What is it that has changed? . . ."

He asked:

"What is your name?"

"Georges."

"Oh! yes. I remember. Christophe Olivier Georges. . . . How old are you?"

"Fourteen."

"Fourteen! Is it so long ago? . . . It is as though it were yesterday—or far back in the darkness of time. . . . How like you are to him! The same features. It is the same, and yet another. The same colored eyes, but not the same eyes. The same smile, the same lips, but not the same voice. You are stronger. You hold yourself more erect: your face is fuller, but you blush just as he used to do. Come, sit down, let us talk. Who sent you to me?"

"No one."

"You came of your own accord? How do you know about me?"

"People have talked to me about you."

"Who?"

"My mother."

"Ah!" said Christophe. "Does she know that you came to see me?"

"No."

Christophe said nothing for a moment; then he asked:

"Where do you live?"

"Near the Parc Monceau."

"You walked here? Yes? It is a long way. You must be tired."

"I am never tired."

"Good! Show me your arms."

(He felt them.)

"You are a strong boy. . . . What put it into your head to come and see me?"

"My father loved you more than any one."

"Did she tell you so?"

(He corrected himself.)

"Did your mother tell you so?"

"Yes."

Christophe smiled pensively. He thought: "She too! . . . How they all loved him! Why did they not let him see it? . . ."

He went on:

"Why did you wait so long before you came?"

"I wanted to come sooner. But I thought you would not want to see me."

"I!"

"I saw you several weeks ago at the Chevillard concerts: I was with my mother, sitting a little away from you: I bowed to you: you looked through me, and frowned, and took no notice."

"I looked at you? . . . My poor boy, how could you think that? . . . I did not see you. My eyes are tired. That is why I frown. . . You don't think me so cruel as that?"

"I think you could be cruel too, if you wanted to be."

"Really?" said Christophe. "In that case, if you thought I did not want to see you, how did you dare to come?"

"Because I wanted to see you."

"And if I had refused to see you?"

"I shouldn't have let you do that."

He said this with a little decided air, at once shy and provoking.

Christophe burst out laughing, and Georges laughed too.

"You would have sent me packing! Think of that! You rogue! . . . No, decidedly, you are not like your father."

A shadow passed over the boy's mobile face.

"You think I am not like him? But you said, just now . . . ? You don't think he would have loved me? You don't love me?"

"What difference does it make to you whether I love you or not?"

"A great deal of difference."

"Because . . . ?"

"Because I love you."

In a moment his eyes, his lips, all his features, took on a dozen different expressions, like the shadows of the clouds on an April day chasing over the fields before the spring winds. Christophe had the most lovely joy in gazing at him and listening to him; it seemed to him that all the cares of the past were washed away; his sorrowful experiences, his trials, his sufferings and Olivier's sufferings, all

were wiped out: he was born again in this young shoot of Olivier's life.

They talked on. Georges knew nothing of Christophe's music until the last few months, but since Christophe had been in Paris, he had never missed a concert at which his work was played. He spoke of it with an eager expression, his eyes shining and laughing, with the tears not far behind: he was like a lover. He told Christophe that he adored music, and that he wanted to be a composer. But after a question or two, Christophe saw that the boy knew not even the elements of music. He asked about his work. Young Jeannin was at the lycée; he said cheerfully that he was not a good scholar.

"What are you best at? Literature or science?"

"Very much the same."

"What? What? Are you a dunce?"

The boy laughed frankly and said:

"I think so."

Then he added confidentially:

"But I know that I am not, all the same."

Christophe could not help laughing.

"Then why don't you work? Aren't you interested in anything?"

"No. I'm interested in everything."

"Well, then, why?"

"Everything is so interesting that there is no time. . . ."

"No time? What the devil do you do?"

He made a vague gesture:

"Many things. I play music, and games, and I go to exhibitions. I read. . . ."

"You would do better to read your school-books."

"We never read anything interesting in school. . . . Besides, we travel. Last month I went to England to see the Oxford and Cambridge match."

"That must help your work a great deal!"

"Bah! You learn much more that way than by staying at the lycée."

"And what does your mother say to that?"

"Mother is very reasonable. She does whatever I want."

"You bad boy! . . . You can thank your stars I am not your father. . . ."

"You wouldn't have had a chance. . . ."

It was impossible to resist his banter.

"Tell me, you traveler," said Christophe. "Do you know my country?"

"Yes."

"I bet you don't know a word of German."

"Yes, I do. I know it quite well."

"Let us see."

They began to talk German. The boy jabbered on quite ungrammatically with the most droll coolness; he was very intelligent and wide awake, and guessed more than he understood: often he guessed wrong; but he was the first to laugh at his mistakes. He talked eagerly about his travels and his reading. He had read a great deal, hastily, superficially, skipping half the pages, and inventing what he had left unread, but he was always urged on by a keen curiosity, forever seeking reasons for enthusiasm. He jumped from one subject to another, and his face grew animated as he talked of plays or books that had moved him. There was no sort of order in his knowledge. It was impossible to tell how he could read right through a tenth-rate book, and yet know nothing of the greatest masterpieces.

"That is all very well," said Christophe. "But you will never do anything if you do not work."

"Oh! I don't need to. We are rich."

"The devil! Then it is a very serious state of things. Do you want to be a man who does nothing and is good for nothing?"

"No. I should like to do everything. It is stupid to shut yourself up all your life in a profession."

"But it is the only means yet discovered of doing any good."

"So they say!"

"What do you mean? 'So they say!' . . . I say so. I've been working at my profession for forty years, and I am just beginning to get a glimmer of it."

"Forty years, to learn a profession! When can you begin to practise it?"

Christophe began to laugh.

"You little disputatious Frenchman!"

"I want to be a musician," said Georges.

"Well, it is not too early for you to begin. Shall I teach you?"

"Oh! I should be so glad!"

"Come to-morrow. I'll see what you are worth. If you are worth nothing, I shall forbid you ever to lay hands on a piano. If you have a real inclination for it, we'll try and make something of you. . . . But, I warn you, I shall make you work."

"I will work," said Georges delightedly.

They said good-bye until the morrow. As he was going, Georges remembered that he had other engagements on the morrow, and also for the day after. Yes, he was not free until the end of the week. They arranged day and hour.

But when the day and hour came, Christophe waited in vain. He was disappointed. He had been looking forward with child-like glee to seeing Georges again. His unexpected visit had brightened his life. It had made him so happy, and moved him so much that he had not slept the night after it. With tender gratitude he thought of the young friend who had sought him out for his friend's sake. His natural grace, his malicious and ingenuous frankness had delighted him: he sank back into the mute intoxication, the buzzing of happiness, which had filled his ears and his heart during the first days of his friendship with Olivier. It was allied now with a graver and almost religious feeling which, through the living, saw the smile of the past.—He waited all the next day and the day after. Nobody came. Not even a letter of excuse. Christophe was very mournful, and cast about for excuses for the boy. He did not know where to write to him, and he did not know his address. Had he had it he would not have dared to write. When the heart of an older man is filled with love for a young crea-

ture, he feels a certain modesty about letting him see the need he has of him: he knows that the young man has not the same need: they are not evenly matched: and nothing is so much dreaded as to seem to be imposing oneself on a person who cares not a jot.

The silence dragged on. Although Christophe suffered under it, he forced himself to take no step to hunt up the Jeannins. But every day he expected the boy, who never came. He did not go to Switzerland, but stayed through the summer in Paris. He thought himself absurd, but he had no taste for traveling. Only when September came did he decide to spend a few days at Fontainebleau.

About the end of October Georges Jeannin came and knocked at his door. He excused himself calmly, without being in the least put out by his long silence.

"I could not come," he said. "And then we went away to stay in Brittany."

"You might have written to me," said Christophe.

"Yes. I did try. But I never had the time. . . . Besides," he said, laughing, "I forgot all about it."

"When did you come back?"

"At the beginning of October."

"And it has taken you three weeks to come? . . . Listen. Tell me frankly: Did your mother prevent you? . . . Does she dislike your seeing me?"

"No. Not at all. She told me to come to-day."

"What?"

"The last time I saw you before the holidays I told her everything when I got home. She told me I had done right, and she asked about you, and pestered me with a great many questions. When we came home from Brittany, three weeks ago, she made me promise to go and see you again. A week ago she reminded me again. This morning, when she found that I had not been, she was angry with me, and wanted me to go directly after breakfast, without more ado."

"And aren't you ashamed to tell me that? Must you be forced to come and see me?"

"No. You mustn't think that. . . . Oh! I have annoyed

you. Forgive me. . . . I am a muddle-headed idiot. . . . Scold me, but don't be angry with me. I love you. If I did not love you I should not have come. I was not forced to come. I can't be forced to do anything but what I want to do."

"You rascal!" said Christophe, laughing in spite of himself. "And your musical projects, what about them?"

"Oh! I am still thinking about it."

"That won't take you very far."

"I want to begin now. I couldn't begin these last few months. I have had so much to do! But now you shall see how I will work, if you still want to have anything to do with me. . . ."

(He looked slyly at Christophe.)

"You are an impostor," said Christophe.

"You don't take me seriously."

"No, I don't."

"It is too dreadful. Nobody takes me seriously. I lose all heart."

"I shall take you seriously when I see you working."

"At once, then."

"I have no time now. To-morrow."

"No. To-morrow is too far off. I can't bear you to despise me for a whole day."

"You bore me."

"Please! . . ."

Smiling at his weakness, Christophe made him sit at the piano, and talked to him about music. He asked him many questions, and made him solve several little problems of harmony. Georges did not know much about it, but his musical instinct supplied the gaps of his ignorance; without knowing their names, he found the chords Christophe wanted; and even his mistakes in their awkwardness showed a curiosity of taste and a singularly acute sensibility. He did not accept Christophe's remarks without discussion; and the intelligent questions he asked in his turn bore witness to the sincerity of a mind that would not accept art as a devout formula to be repeated with the lips, but desired to live it for its own sake.—They did not only talk of

music. In reference to harmony, Georges would summon up pictures, the country, people. It was difficult to hold him in check: it was constantly necessary to bring him back to the middle of the road: and Christophe had not always the heart to do so. It amused him to hear the boy's joyous chatter, so full of wit and life. What a difference there was between his nature and Olivier's! With the one life was a subterranean river that flowed silently; with the other, all was above ground: a capricious stream disporting itself in the sun. And yet it was the same lovely, pure water, like their eyes. With a smile, Christophe recognized in Georges certain instinctive antipathies, likings and dislikings, which he well knew, and the naïve intolerance, the generosity of heart which gives itself entirely to whatsoever it loves. . . . Only Georges loved so many things that he had no time to love any one thing for long.

He came back the next day and the days following. He was filled with a youthful passion for Christophe, and he worked enthusiastically at his lessons. . . .—Then his enthusiasm palled, his visits grew less frequent. He came less and less often. Then he came no more, and disappeared for weeks.

He was light-hearted, forgetful, naïvely selfish, and sincerely affectionate; he had a good heart and a quick intelligence which he expended piecemeal day by day. People forgave him everything because they were so glad to see him; he was happy. . . .

Christophe refused to judge him. He did not complain. He wrote to Jacqueline to thank her for having sent her son to him. Jacqueline replied with a short letter filled with restrained emotion: she expressed a hope that Christophe would be interested in Georges and help him in his life. Through shame and pride she could not bring herself to see him again. And Christophe thought he could not visit her without being invited.—So they stayed apart, seeing each other at a distance at concerts, bound together only by the boy's infrequent visits.

Christophe was the only person who had any influence over young Jeannin. His influence was limited and very in-

termittent, but all the more remarkable in that it was difficult to explain. Christophe belonged to the preceding generation against which Georges and his companions were violently in reaction.

Georges did not remember much of what Christophe said to him. He was open-minded enough to grasp Christophe's ideas, but they escaped him at once. He forgot everything before he reached the bottom of the stairs. But all the same, he had a feeling of well-being, which endured when the memory of the words that had produced it had long been wiped out. He had a real veneration for Christophe. He believed in nothing that Christophe believed in (at heart he laughed at everything and had no belief). But he would have broken the head of any man who took upon himself to speak ill of his old friend.

The soothing influence that Christophe exercised over Georges had the source of its power in Grazia's love. It was through this love that he felt himself so near to all young things, and had an inexhaustible fund of sympathy for every new form of life. Whatever the forces might be that rekindled the earth, he was always with them, even when they were against him: he had no fear for the immediate future of the democracies, that future which caused such an outcry against the egoism of a handful of privileged men: he did not cling desperately to the pater-nosters of an old art: he felt quite sure that from the fabulous visions, the realized dreams of science and action, a new art, more puissant than the old, would spring forth: he hailed the new dawn of the world, even though the beauty of the old world were to die with it.

Grazia knew the good that her love did for Christophe: and this consciousness of her power lifted her out of herself. Through her letters she exercised a controlling power over her friend. She was not so absurdly pretentious as to try to control his art: she had too much tact, and knew her limitations. But her true, pure voice was the diapason to which he attuned his soul. Christophe had only to hear her voice echoing his thought to think nothing that was not just, pure, and worthy of repetition. The sound of a beauti-

ful instrument is to a musician like a beautiful body in which his dream at once becomes incarnate. Mysterious is the fusion of two loving spirits: each takes the best from the other, but only to give it back again enriched with love. Grazia was not afraid to tell Christophe that she loved him. Distance gave her more freedom of speech, and also, the certain knowledge that she would never be his. Her love, the religious fervor of which was communicated to Christophe, was a fountain of force and peace to him.

Georges came to Christophe's one afternoon, preoccupied with his own troubles—some athletic failure. Christophe listened to him good-humoredly and teased him affectionately. There was a ring at the door. Georges went to open it. A servant had come with a letter from Colette. Christophe stood by the window to read it. Then he left the room without a word.

As time passed and he did not return, Georges went and knocked at the door of the next room. There was no reply. Georges did not persist, for he knew his old friend's queer ways. A few minutes later Christophe returned without a word. He seemed very calm, very kind, very gentle. He begged his pardon for leaving him, took up the conversation where he had left it, and spoke kindly about his troubles, and said many helpful things. The tone of his voice moved the boy, though he knew not why.

When he left, Georges went straight to Colette's and found her in tears. As soon as she saw him she came swiftly to him and asked:

"How did our poor friend take the blow? It is terrible."

Georges did not understand. And Colette told him that she had just sent Christophe the news of Grazia's death.

She was gone, without having had time to say farewell to anybody. For several months past the roots of her life had been almost torn out of the earth: a puff of wind was enough to lay it low. On the evening before the relapse of influenza which carried her off she received a long, kind letter from Christophe. It had filled her with tenderness, and she longed to bid him come to her: she felt that every-

thing else, everything that kept them apart, was absurd and culpable. She was very weary, and put off writing to him until the next day. On the day after she had to stay in bed. She began a letter which she did not finish: she had an attack of giddiness, and her head swam: besides, she was reluctant to speak of her illness, and was afraid of troubling Christophe. He was busy at the time with rehearsals of a choral symphony set to a poem of Emmanuel's: the subject had roused them both to enthusiasm, for it was something symbolical of their own destiny: *The Promised Land*. Christophe had often mentioned it to Grazia. The first performance was to take place the following week. . . . She must not upset him. In her letter Grazia just spoke of a slight cold. Then that seemed too much to her. She tore up the letter, and had no strength left to begin another. She told herself that she would write in the evening. When the evening came it was too late—too late to bid him come, too late even to write. . . . How swiftly everything passes! A few hours are enough to destroy the labor of ages. . . . Grazia hardly had time to give her daughter a ring she wore and beg her to send it to her friend. Till then she had not been very intimate with Aurora. Now that her life was ebbing away, she gazed passionately at the face of the girl: she clung to the hand that would pass on the pressure of her own, and, joyfully, she thought:

"Not all of me will pass away."

For a long time Christophe sat. Night came. He was not suffering: he was not thinking: he saw no definite image. He was like a tired man listening to some vague music without making any attempt to understand it. The night was far gone when he got up, cramped and stiff. He flung himself on his bed and slept heavily. The symphony went on buzzing all around him. . . .

And now he saw *her*, the well-beloved. . . . She held out her hands to him, and said, smiling:

"Now you have passed through the zone of fire."

Then his heart melted. An indescribable peace filled the

starry spaces, where the music of the spheres flung out its great, still, profound sheets of water. . . .

When he awoke (it was day), his strange happiness still endured, with the distant gleam of words falling upon his ears. He got up. He was exalted with a silent, holy enthusiasm.

For a long time now more than half his soul had dwelt upon the other side. The more a man lives, the more a man creates, the more a man loves and loses those whom he loves, the more does he escape from death. With every new blow that we have to bear, with every new work that we round and finish, we escape from ourselves, we escape into the work we have created, the soul we have loved, the soul that has left us. When all is told, Rome is not in Rome: the best of a man lies outside himself. Only Grazia had withheld him on this side of the wall. And now in her turn . . . Now the door was shut upon the world of sorrow.

He lived through a period of secret exaltation. He felt the weight of no fetters. He expected nothing of the things of this world. He was dependent upon nothing. He was set free. The struggle was at an end. Issuing from the zone of combat and the circle where reigned the God of heroic conflict, *Dominus Deus Sabaoth*, he looked down, and in the night saw the torch of the Burning Bush put out. How far away it was! When it had lit up his path he had thought himself almost at the summit. And since then, how far he had had to go! And yet the topmost pinnacle seemed no nearer. He would never reach it (he saw that now), though he were to march on to eternity. But when a man enters the circle of light and knows that he has not left those he loves behind him, eternity is not too long a space to be journeying on with them.

From that period date his most poignant and his happiest works: a scene from the Gospel which Georges recognized—

"Mulier, quid ploras?"—"Quia tulerunt Dominum meum, et nescio ubi posuerunt eum."

Et cum hæc dixisset, conversa est retrorsum, et vidit Jesum stantem: et non sciebat quia Jesus est.

—a series of tragic *lieder* set to verses of popular Spanish *cantares*, among others a gloomy sad love-song, like a black flame—

*“Quisiera ser el sepulcro
Donde à ti te han de enterrar,
Para tenerte en mis brazos
Por toda la eternidad.”*

(“Would I were the grave, where thou art to be buried, that I might hold thee in my arms through all eternity.”)

—and two symphonies, called *The Island of Tranquillity* and *The Dream of Scipio*, in which, more intimately than in any other of the works of Jean-Christophe Krafft, is realized the union of the most beautiful of the forces of the music of his time: the affectionate and wise thought of Germany with all its shadowy windings, the clear passionate melody of Italy, and the quick mind of France, rich in subtle rhythms and variegated harmonies.

This “enthusiasm begotten of despair at the time of a great loss” lasted for a few months. Thereafter Christophe fell back into his place in life with a stout heart and a sure foot. The wind of death had blown away the last mists of pessimism, the gray of the Stoic soul, and the phantasmagoria of the mystic chiaroscuro. The rainbow had shone upon the vanishing clouds. The gaze of heaven, purer, as though it had been laved with tears, smiled through them. There was the peace of evening on the mountains.

III

The dream is ended. *Te Deum*. . . .

The white clouds of summer, like great birds of light,

slowly soar and hover; and the heavens are filled with their widespread wings.

And yet his life was very far from being one with his art. A man of his kind cannot do without love, not merely that equable love which the spirit of an artist sheds on all things in the world, but a love that knows *preference*: he must always be giving himself to the creatures of his choice. They are the roots of the tree. Through them his heart's blood is renewed.

Christophe's heart's blood was nothing like dried up. He was steeped in a love which was the best part of his joy, a twofold love, for Grazia's daughter and Olivier's son. He united them in thought, and was to unite them in reality.

Georges and Aurora had met at Colette's: Aurora lived in her cousin's house. She spent part of the year in Rome and the rest in Paris. She was eighteen: Georges five years older. She was tall, erect, elegant, with a small head, and an open countenance, fair hair, a dark complexion, a slight down on her lips, bright eyes with a laughing expression behind which lay busy thoughts, a rather plump chin, brown hands, beautiful round strong arms, and a fine bust, and she always looked gay, proud and worldly. She was not at all intellectual, hardly at all sentimental, and she had inherited her mother's careless indolence. She would sleep eleven hours on end. The rest of the time she spent in lounging and laughing, only half awake. Christophe called her *Dornröschen*—the Sleeping Beauty.

Christophe would watch her and laugh gently to himself. He had a fatherly tenderness, indulgent and teasing, for Aurora. And he had also a secret feeling of worship for the woman he had loved who had come again with new youth for another love than his. No one knew the depth of his affection. Only Aurora ever suspected it. She was sincerely attached to her old friend, although she could never have made the effort necessary to play or to read his work. Though she was a fairly good musician, she had never even had the curiosity to cut the pages of a score he had dedicated to her. She loved to come and have an intimate

talk with him.—She came more often when she found out that she might meet Georges Jeannin in his rooms.

And Georges, too, found an extraordinary interest in Christophe's company.

So Christophe labored to bring the two young people together. And when he had succeeded he was almost sorry. He loved them equally; but he judged Georges more hardly: he knew his weakness: he idolized Aurora, and thought himself responsible for her happiness even more than for Georges's; for it seemed to him that Georges was as a son to him, a part of himself, and he wondered whether it was not wrong to give Aurora in her innocence a companion who was very far from sharing it.

But one day as he passed by an arbor where the two young people were sitting—(a short time after their betrothal)—his heart sank as he heard Aurora laughingly questioning Georges about one of his past adventures, and Georges telling her, nothing loth. Other scraps of conversation, which they made no attempt to disguise, showed him that Aurora was far more at home than himself with Georges's moral ideas. Though they were very much in love with each other it was clear that they did not regard themselves as bound forever; into their discussions of questions relating to love and marriage, they brought a spirit of liberty, which might have a beauty of its own, though it was singularly at variance with the old ideal of mutual devotion *usque ad mortem*. And Christophe would look at them a little sadly. . . . How far they were from him already! How swiftly does the ship that bears our children speed on! . . . Patience! A day will come when we shall all meet in harbor.

About this time his friends noticed a change in his manner. He was often distracted and absent-minded. He hardly listened to what was said to him. He had an absorbed, smiling expression. When his absent-mindedness was commented upon he would gently excuse himself. Sometimes he would speak of himself in the third person:

"Krafft will do that for you. . . ."

or,

"Christophe will laugh at that. . . ."

People who did not know him said:

"What extraordinary self-infatuation!"

But it was just the opposite. He saw himself from the outside, as a stranger. He had reached the stage when a man loses interest even in the struggle for the beautiful, because, when a man has done his work, he is inclined to believe that others will do theirs, and that, when all is told, as Rodin says, "the beautiful will always triumph." The malevolence and injustice of men did not repel him.—He would laugh and tell himself that it was not natural, that life was ebbing away from him.

In fact, he had lost much of his old vigor. The least physical effort, a long walk, a fast drive, exhausted him. He quickly lost his breath, and he had pains in his heart. He never told anybody what he was feeling. It was no good. It was useless to upset his friends, and he would never get any better. Besides he did not take his symptoms seriously. He far more dreaded having to take care of himself than being ill.

He had an inward presentiment and a desire to see his country once more. He had postponed going from year to year, always saying—"next year. . . ." Now he would postpone it no longer.

He did not tell any one, and went away by stealth. The journey was short. Christophe found nothing that he had come to seek. The changes that had been in the making on his last visit were now fully accomplished: the little town had become a great industrial city. The old houses had disappeared. The cemetery also was gone. The river had washed away the meadows where Christophe had played as a child. A street (and such a street!) between black buildings bore his name. The whole of the past was dead, even death itself. . . . So be it! Life was going on: perhaps other little Christophes were dreaming, suffering, struggling, in the shabby houses in the street that was called after him.—At a concert in the gigantic *Tonhalle* he heard some of

his music played, all topsy-turvy: he hardly recognized it. . . . So be it! Though it were misunderstood it might perhaps arouse new energy. We sowed the seed. Do what you will with it: feed on us.—At nightfall Christophe walked through the fields outside the city; great mists were rolling over them, and he thought of the great mists that should enshroud his life, and those whom he had loved, who were gone from the earth, who had taken refuge in his heart, who, like himself, would be covered up by the falling night. . . . So be it! So be it! I am not afraid of thee, O night, thou devourer of suns! For one star that is put out, thousands are lit up. Like a bowl of boiling milk, the abysm of space is overflowing with light. Thou shalt not put me out. The breath of death will set the flame of my life flickering up once more. . . .

On his return from Germany, Christophe wanted to stop in the town where he had known Anna. Since he had left it, he had had no news of her. He had never dared to ask after her. For years her very name was enough to upset him. . . .—Now he was calm and had no fear. But in the evening, in his room in the hotel looking out on the Rhine, the familiar song of the bells ringing in the morrow's festival awoke the images of the past. From the river there ascended the faint odor of distant danger, which he found it hard to understand. He spent the whole night in recollection. He felt that he was free of the terrible Lord, and found sweet sadness in the thought. He had not made up his mind what to do on the following day. For a moment—(the past lay so far behind!)—he thought of calling on the Brauns. But when the morrow came his courage failed him: he dared not even ask at the hotel whether the doctor and his wife were still alive. He made up his mind to go. . . .

When the time came for him to go an irresistible force drove him to the church which Anna used to attend: he stood behind a pillar from which he could see the seat where in old days she used to come and kneel. He waited, feeling sure that, if she were still alive, she would come.

A woman did come, and he did not recognize her. She was like all the rest, plump, full-faced, with a heavy chin,

and an indifferent, hard expression. She was dressed in black. She sat down in her place, and did not stir. There was nothing in the woman to remind Christophe of the woman he was expecting. Only once or twice she made a certain queer little gesture as though to smooth out the folds of her skirt about her knees. In old days, *she* had made such a gesture. . . . As she went out she passed slowly by him, with her head erect and her hands holding her prayer-book, folded in front of her. For a moment her somber, tired eyes met Christophe's. And they looked at each other. And they did not recognize each other. She passed on, straight and stiff, and never turned her head. It was only after a moment that suddenly, in a flash of memory, beneath the frozen smile, he recognized the lips he had kissed by a certain fold in them. . . . He gasped for breath and his knees trembled. He thought:

"Lord, is that the body in which she dwelt whom I loved? Where is she? Where is she? And where am I, myself? Where is the man who loved her? What is there left of us and the cruel love that consumed us?—Ashes. Where is the fire?"

And his God answered and said:

"In Me."

Then he raised his eyes and saw her for the last time in the crowd passing through the door into the sunlight.

The marriage of Georges and Aurora had been fixed for the early spring. Christophe's health was declining rapidly. He had seen his children watching him anxiously. Once he heard them whispering to each other. Georges was saying:

"How ill he looks! He looks as though he might fall ill at any moment."

And Aurora replied:

"If only he does not delay our marriage!"

He did not forget it. Poor children! They might be sure that he would not disturb their happiness!

But he was inconsiderate enough on the eve of the marriage—he had been absurdly excited as the day drew near:

as excited as though it were he who was going to be married)—he was stupid enough to be attacked by his old trouble, a recurrence of pneumonia, which had first attacked him in the days of the Market-Place. He was furious with himself, and dubbed himself fool and idiot. He swore that he would not give in until the marriage had taken place. He thought of Grazia as she lay dying, never telling him of her illness because of his approaching concert, for fear lest he should be distracted from his work and pleasure. Now he loved the idea of doing for her daughter—for her—what she had done for him. He concealed his condition, but he found it hard to keep himself going. However, the happiness of his children made him so happy that he managed to support the long ordeal of the religious ceremony without disaster. But he had hardly reached Colette's house than his strength gave out: he had just time enough to shut himself up in a room, and then he fainted. He was found by a servant. When he came to himself Christophe forbade them to say anything to the bride and bridegroom, who were going off on their honeymoon in the evening. They were too much taken up with themselves to notice anything else. They left him gaily, promising to write to him to-morrow, and afterwards. . . .

As soon as they were gone, Christophe took to his bed. He was feverish, and could not shake off the fever. He was alone. Christophe did not call in a doctor. He did not think his condition was serious. Besides, he had no servant to go for a doctor. The housekeeper who came for two hours in the morning took no interest in him, and he dispensed with her services. He had a dozen times begged her not to touch any of his papers when she was dusting his room. She would do it: she thought she had a fine opportunity to do as she liked, now that he was confined to his bed. In the mirror of his wardrobe door he saw her from his bed turning the whole room upside down. He was so furious—(no, assuredly the old Adam was not dead in him!)—that he jumped out of bed, snatched a packet of papers out of her hands, and showed her the door. His anger cost him a bout of fever

and the departure of the servant, who lost her temper and never returned, without even taking the trouble to tell the "old madman," as she called him. So he was left, ill, with no one to look after him. He would get up in the morning to take in the jug of milk left at the door, and to see if the portress had not slipped under the door the promised letter from the lovers. The letter did not come: they had forgotten him in their happiness. He was not angry with them, and thought that in their place he would have done the same. He thought of their careless joy, and that it was he had given it to them.

He was a little better and was able to get up when at last a letter came from Aurora. Georges had been content to add his signature. Aurora asked very little about Christophe and told very little, but, to make up for it, she gave him a commission, begging him to send her a necktie she had left at Colette's. Although it was not at all important—(Aurora had only thought of it as she sat down to write to Christophe, and then only because she wanted something to say),—Christophe was only too delighted to be of use, and went out at once to fetch it. The weather was cold and gusty. The winter had taken an unpleasant turn. Melting snow, and an icy wind. There were no carriages to be had. Christophe spent some time in a parcels' office. The rudeness of the clerks and their deliberate slowness made him irritable, which did not help his business on. His illness was partly responsible for his gusts of anger, which the tranquillity of his mind repudiated; they shook his body, like the last tremors of an oak falling under the blows of an ax. He returned chilled and trembling. As he entered, the portress handed him a cutting from a review. He glanced at it. It was a spiteful attack upon himself. They were growing rare in these days. There is no pleasure in attacking a man who never notices the blows dealt him. The most violent of his enemies were reduced to a feeling of respect for him, which exasperated them, for they still detested him.

"*We believe,*" said Bismarck, almost regretfully, "*that nothing is more involuntary than love. Respect is even more so. . . .*"

But the writer of the article was one of those strong men, who, being better armed than Bismarck, escape both respect and love. He spoke of Christophe in insulting terms, and announced a series of attacks during the following fortnight: Christophe began to laugh, and said as he went to bed again:

"He will be surprised! He won't find me at home!"

They tried to make him have a nurse, but he refused obstinately, saying that he had lived alone so much that he thought he might at least have the benefit of his solitude at such a time.

He was never bored. During these last years he had constantly been engrossed in dialogues with himself; it was as though his soul was twofold; and for some months past his inward company had been considerably augmented: not two souls, but ten, now dwelt in him. They held converse among themselves, though more often they sang. He would take part in their conversation, or he would hold his peace and listen to them. He had always on his bed, or on the table, within reach of his hand, music-paper on which he used to take down their remarks and his own, and laugh at their rejoinders. It was a mechanical habit: the two actions, thinking and writing, had become almost simultaneous with him; writing was thinking out loud to him. Everything that took him away from the company of his many souls exhausted and irritated him, even the friends he loved best, sometimes. He tried hard not to let them see it, but such constraint induced an extreme lassitude. He was very happy when he came to himself again, for he would lose himself: it was impossible to hear the inward voices amid the chattering of human beings. Divine silence! . . .

He would only allow the portress or one of her children to come three or four times a day to see if he needed anything.

He lay motionless upon his bed. In the room above him some silly woman would go on playing the piano for hours. She only knew one piece, and she would go on tirelessly repeating the same bars; they gave her so much pleasure!

They were a joy, an emotion to her; every color, every kind of form was in them. And Christophe could understand her happiness, but she made him weep with exasperation. If only she would not hit the keys so hard! Noise was as odious to Christophe as vice. . . . In the end he became resigned to it. It was hard to learn not to hear. And yet it was less difficult than he thought. He would leave his sick, coarse body. How humiliating it was to have been shut up in it for so many years! He would watch its decay and think:

"It will not go on much longer."

He would feel the pulse of his human egoism and wonder:

"Which would you prefer? To have the name and personality of Christophe become immortal and his work disappear, or to have his work endure and no trace be left of his personality and name?"

Without a moment's hesitation he replied:

"Let me disappear and my work endure! My gain is twofold: for only what is most true of me, the real truth of myself will remain. Let Christophe perish! . . ."

But very soon he felt that he was becoming as much a stranger to his work as to himself. How childish was the illusion of believing that his art would endure! He saw clearly not only how little he had done, but how surely all modern music was doomed to destruction. More quickly than any other the language of music is consumed by its own heat; at the end of a century or two it is understood only by a few initiates. For how many do Monteverdi and Lully still exist? Already the oaks of the classic forest are eaten away with moss. Our buildings of sound, in which our passions sing, will soon be empty temples, will soon crumble away into oblivion.—And Christophe was amazed to find himself gazing at the ruins untroubled.

"Have I begun to love life less?" he wondered.

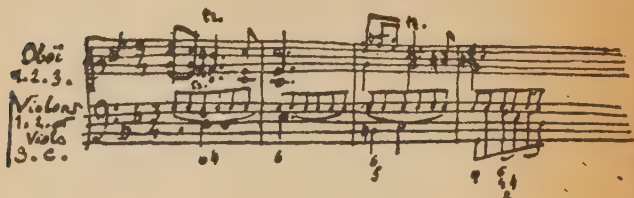
But at once he understood that he loved it more. . . . Why weep over the ruins of art? They are not worth it. Art is the shadow man casts upon Nature. Let them disappear to-

gether, sucked up by the sun's rays! They prevent my seeing the sun.—The vast treasure of Nature passes through our fingers. Human intelligence tries to catch the running water in the meshes of a net. Our music is an illusion. Our scale of sounds is an invention. It answers to no living sound. It is a compromise of the mind between real sounds, the application of the metric system to the moving infinite. The mind needs such a lie as this to understand the incomprehensible, and the mind has believed the lie, because it wished to believe it. But it is not true. It is not alive. And the delight which the mind takes in this order of its own creation has only been obtained by falsifying the direct intuition of what is. From time to time, a genius, in passing contact with the earth, suddenly perceives the torrent of reality, overflowing the continents of art. The dykes crack for a moment. Nature creeps in through a fissure. But at once the gap is stopped up. It must be done to safeguard the reason of mankind. It would perish if its eyes met the eyes of Jehovah. Then once more it begins to strengthen the walls of its cell, which nothing enters from without, except it have first been wrought upon. And it is beautiful, perhaps, for those who will not see. . . . But for me, I will see Thy face, Jehovah! I will hear the thunder of Thy voice, though it bring me to nothingness. The noise of art is an hindrance to me. Let the mind hold its peace! Let man be silent! . . .

But a few minutes after this harangue he groped for one of the sheets of paper that lay scattered on his bed, and he tried to write down a few more notes. When he saw the contradiction of it, he smiled and said:

“Oh, my music, companion of all my days, thou art better than I. I am an ingrate: I send thee away from me. But thou wilt not leave me: thou wilt not be repulsed at my caprice. Forgive me. Thou knowest these are but whimsies. I have never betrayed thee, thou hast never betrayed me; and we are sure of each other. We will go home together, my friend. Stay with me to the end.

Bleib bei uns. . . .



He awoke from a long torpor, heavy with fever and dreams. Strange dreams of which he was still full. And now he looked at himself, touched himself, sought and could not find himself. He seemed to himself to be "another." Another, dearer than himself. . . . Who? . . . It seemed to him that in his dreams another soul had taken possession of him. Olivier? Grazia? . . . His heart and his head were so weak! He could not distinguish between his loved ones. Why should he distinguish between them? He loved them all equally.

He lay bound in a sort of overwhelming beatitude. He made no attempt to move. He knew that sorrow lay in ambush for him, like a cat waiting for a mouse. He lay like one dead. Already. . . . There was no one in the room. Overhead the piano was silent. Solitude. Silence. Christophe sighed.

"How good it is to think, at the end of life, that I have never been alone even in my greatest loneliness! . . . Souls that I have met on the way, brothers, who for a moment have held out their hands to me, mysterious spirits sprung from my mind, living and dead—all living.—O all that I have loved, all that I have created! Ye surround me with your warm embrace, ye watch over me. I hear the music of your voices. Blessed be destiny, that has given you to me! I am rich, I am rich. . . . My heart is full! . . ."

He looked out through the window. . . . It was one of those beautiful sunless days, which, as old Balzac said, are like a beautiful blind woman. . . . Christophe was passionately absorbed in gazing at the branch of a tree that grew in

front of the window. The branch was swelling, the moist buds were bursting, the little white flowers were expanding; and in the flowers, in the leaves, in the whole tree coming to new life, there was such an ecstasy of surrender to the new-born force of spring, that Christophe was no longer conscious of his weariness, his depression, his wretched, dying body, and lived again in the branch of the tree. He was steeped in the gentle radiance of its life. It was like a kiss. His heart, big with love, turned to the beautiful tree, smiling there upon his last moments. He thought that at that moment there were creatures loving each other, that to others this hour, that was so full of agony for him, was an hour of ecstasy, that it is ever thus, and that the puissant joy of living never runs dry. And in a choking voice that would not obey his thoughts—(possibly no sound at all came from his lips, but he knew it not)—he chanted a hymn to life.

An invisible orchestra answered him. Christophe said within himself:

"How can they know? We did not rehearse it. If only they can go on to the end without a mistake!"

He tried to sit up so as to see the whole orchestra, and beat time with his arms outstretched. But the orchestra made no mistake; they were sure of themselves. What marvelous music! How wonderfully they improvised the responses! Christophe was amused.

"Wait a bit, old fellow! I'll catch you out."

And with a tug at the tiller he drove the ship capriciously to left and right through dangerous channels.

"How will you get out of that? . . . And this? Caught! . . . And what about this?"

But they always extricated themselves: they countered all his audacities with even bolder ventures.

"What will they do now? . . . The rascals! . . ."

Christophe cried "bravo!" and roared with laughter.

"The devil! It is becoming difficult to follow them! Am I to let them beat me? . . . But, you know, this is not a game! I'm done, now. . . . No matter! They shan't say that they had the last word. . . ."

But the orchestra exhibited such an overpoweringly novel and abundant fancy that there was nothing to be done but to sit and listen open-mouthed. They took his breath away. . . . Christophe was filled with pity for himself.

"Idiot!" he said to himself. "You are empty. Hold your peace! The instrument has given all that it can give. Enough of this body! I must have another."

But his body took its revenge. Violent fits of coughing prevented his listening:

"Will you hold your peace?"

He clutched his throat, and thumped his chest, wrestled with himself as with an enemy that he must overthrow. He saw himself again in the middle of a great throng. A crowd of men were shouting all around him. One man gripped him with his arms. They rolled down on the ground. The other man was on top of him. He was choking.

"Let me go. I will hear! . . . I will hear! Let me go or I'll kill you! . . ."

He banged the man's head against the wall, but the man would not let him go.

"Who is it, now? With whom am I wrestling? What is this body that I hold in my grasp, this body warm against me? . . ."

A crowd of hallucinations. A chaos of passions. Fury, lust, murderous desires, the sting of carnal embraces, the last stirring of the mud at the bottom of the pond. . . .

"Ah! Will not the end come soon? Shall I not pluck you off, you leeches clinging to my body? . . . Then let my body perish with them!"

Stiffened in shoulders, loins, knees, Christophe thrust back the invisible enemy. . . . He was free. . . . Yonder, the music was still playing, farther and farther away. Dripping with sweat, broken in body, Christophe held his arms out towards it:

"Wait for me! Wait for me!"

He ran after it. He stumbled. He jostled and pushed his way. . . . He had run so fast that he could not breathe.

His heart beat, his blood roared and buzzed in his ears, like a train rumbling through a tunnel. . . .

"God! How horrible!"

He made desperate signs to the orchestra not to go on without him. . . . At last! He came out of the tunnel! . . . Silence came again. He could hear once more.

"How lovely it is! How lovely! Encore! Bravely, my boys! . . . But who wrote it, who wrote it? . . . What do you say? You tell me that Jean-Christophe Krafft wrote it? Oh! come! Nonsense! I knew him. He couldn't write ten bars of such music as that! . . . Who is that coughing? Don't make such a noise! . . . What chord is that? . . . And that? . . . Not so fast! Wait! . . ."

Christophe uttered inarticulate cries; his hand, clutching the quilt, moved as if it were writing; and his exhausted brain went on mechanically trying to discover the elements of the chords and their consequents. He could not succeed: his emotion made him drop his prize. He began all over again. . . . Ah! This time it was too difficult. . . ."

"Stop, stop. . . . I can no more. . . ."

His will relaxed utterly. Softly Christophe closed his eyes. Tears of happiness trickled down from his closed lids. The little girl who was looking after him, unknown to him, piously wiped them away. He lost all consciousness of what was happening. The orchestra had ceased playing, leaving him on a dizzy harmony, the riddle of which could not be solved. His brain went on saying:

"But what chord is that? How am I to get out of it? I should like to find the way out, before the end. . . ."

Voices were raised now. A passionate voice. Anna's tragic eyes. . . . But a moment and it was no longer Anna. Eyes now so full of kindness. . . .

"Grazia, is it thou? . . . Which of you? Which of you? I cannot see you clearly. . . . Why is the sun so long in coming?"

Then bells rang tranquilly. The sparrows at the window chirped to remind him of the hour when he was wont to give them the breakfast crumbs. . . . In his dream Christophe saw the little room of his childhood. . . . The bells. Now it is dawn! The lovely waves of sound fill the light air. They come from far away, from the villages down yonder.

. . . The murmuring of the river rises from behind the house. . . . Once more Christophe stood gazing down from the staircase window. All his life flowed before his eyes, like the Rhine. All his life, all his lives, Louisa, Gottfried, Olivier. . . .

"Mother, lovers, friends. . . . What are these names? . . . Love. . . . Where are you? Where are you, my souls? I know that you are there, and I cannot take you."

"We are with thee. Peace, O beloved!"

"I will not lose you ever more. I have sought you so long!"

"Be not anxious. We shall never leave thee more."

"Alas! The stream is bearing me on."

"The river that bears thee on, bears us with thee."

"Whither are we going?"

"To the place where we shall be united once more."

"Will it be soon?"

"Look."

And Christophe, making a supreme effort to raise his head—(God! How heavy it was!)—saw the river overflowing its banks, covering the fields, moving on, august, slow, almost still. And, like a flash of steel, on the edge of the horizon there seemed to be speeding towards him a line of silver streams, quivering in the sunlight. The roar of the ocean. . . . And his heart sank, and he asked:

"Is it He?"

And the voices of his loved ones replied:

"It is He!"

And his brain dying, said to itself:

"The gates are opened. . . . That is the chord I was seeking! . . . But it is not the end! There are new spaces! . . .—We will go on, to-morrow."

O joy, the joy of seeing self vanish into the sovereign peace of God, whom all his life he had so striven to serve! . . .

"Lord, art Thou not displeased with Thy servant? I have done so little. I could do no more. . . . I have struggled, I have suffered, I have erred, I have created. Let me draw

breath in Thy Father's arms. Some day I shall be born again for a new fight."

And the murmuring of the river and the roaring of the sea sang with him:

"Thou shalt be born again. Rest. Now all is one heart. The smile of the night and the day entwined. Harmony, the august marriage of love and hate. I will sing to God of the two mighty wings. Hosanna to life! Hosanna to death!

*"Christofori faciem die quacunque tueris,
Illa nempe die non morte mala morieris."*

Saint Christophe has crossed the river. All night long he has marched against the stream. Like a rock his huge-limbed body stands above the water. On his shoulders is the Child, frail and heavy. Saint Christophe leans on a pine-tree that he has plucked up, and it bends. His back also bends. Those who saw him set out vowed that he would never win through, and for a long time their mockery and their laughter followed him. Then the night fell and they grew weary. Now Christophe is too far away for the cries of those standing on the water's brink to reach him. Through the roar of the torrent he hears only the tranquil voice of the Child, clasping a lock of hair on the giant's forehead in his little hand, and crying: "March on."—And with bowed back, and eyes fixed straight in front of him on the dark bank whose towering slopes are beginning to gleam white, he marches on.

Suddenly the Angelus sounds, and the flock of bells suddenly springs into wakefulness. It is the new dawn! Behind the sheer black cliff rises the golden glory of the invisible sun. Almost falling Christophe at last reaches the bank, and he says to the Child:

"Here we are! How heavy thou wert! Child, who art thou?"

And the Child answers:

"I am the day soon to be born."



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